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THE SMART SET

A MAGAZINE OF CLEVERNESS

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Stock Market Jugglery

The events in Wall Street during the past six months have been of a character to emphasize the general public attitude of criticism in reference to the Stock Exchange. Take Steel common as an instance. This stock, so widely held and until recently so highly regarded by the investing public, was manipulated by inside interests to above \$58 a share, *higher than it had ever sold in its history notwithstanding the fact that the steel trade was prostrate*. Men high up in the steel world insisted that steel prices would be kept at the fixed schedule rates until, in the natural process, the business would work back to its old-time volume when Steel Corporation earnings would bound upward beyond all precedent. *It was a poor, misguided public that bought "Little Steel" around \$55 a share and has since been watching the quotations go lower and lower and the predictions of the same big men in the steel trade fall down before the inevitable law of supply and demand*. Is there anyone foolish enough to think that insiders in the Steel Trust did not market their surplus holdings well above the \$50 level, while the deluded purchasers are still holding on, those who could hold on and had the courage to, without knowing how long it will be "in the natural course of events" before not only the steel trade gets back to its old footing, but the same inside manipulators find that it will profit them to make a bull market for this security!

The Value of Real Information

Readers of the TOWN TOPICS FINANCIAL BUREAU letters have all along been amply warned of what was going on not only in the steel trade, but in the stock market as well. *There was scarcely a day when Steel was selling above \$53 that the Bureau did not advise its short sale, "on a scale up" if bulls forced it higher, while during the immense liquidation of February the Bureau foretold to a nicety the big breaks that later took place.*

We think that information such as this which we refer to amply justifies the existence and the policy of this Bureau, which has been a live wire in the Street for twenty years and whose bulletins and letters circulate in the leading brokerage houses and among numberless clients out through the country. The Bureau's policy is to give honest information and well-grounded conclusions on the market in general and individual stocks in particular, so that its clients will be warned in time of the disastrous breaks, due either to bull manipulation overreaching itself or to actual adverse conditions, and will be also advised where there are opportunities for profit in a market that abounds in such opportunities every day in the year. *The Bureau's long experience in the Street gives it exceptional opportunities to judge rightly regarding stock market values and movements, and, as the Bureau operates no accounts whatever and its policy is absolutely free from any entangling alliances that might bias its judgment or advice, its clients have found it worth while to continue their subscription to the daily letter or wire service, or both, year after year. They would not so continue unless the service were of merit and helped them make or save money.* These services are by no means expensive and they cover also the cotton and grain markets. If interested in these markets you should write at once for a circular of particulars.

If you are an active trader and your broker does not have at hand the Bureau's daily bulletins, eight in number and issued before and during the market sessions, we feel sure that he will be glad to secure them for your benefit if you ask him. We have found that brokers are not only willing but anxious to serve their clients in this way.

The Bureau's bulletins are edited by the editors of the financial section of TOWN TOPICS, "The Room-Trader" and "The Digger," with whose careful and unbiased reports of various market conditions you are probably acquainted. The Bureau also, at the desire of clients, makes special reports on particular securities. *There are as many ways of losing money in Wall Street as there are of making it, and our clients have been exceptionally successful in steering clear of the pitfalls with which the Street is honeycombed.* Let us serve you

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HIS CHILD'S GODMOTHER

By FRANCES PUSEY GOOCH

WHEN one considers the idle curiosity rampant at a summer resort, pouncing good-naturedly or otherwise, according to temperament, upon the most commonplace and self-explanatory, veranda habitués of the Mountain Inn may be pardoned the agonies of interest produced by Richard Balfour and his child's godmother.

If the week had revealed any evidences of a betrothal, or, even better, a secret marriage, curiosity would have vented itself in approving smiles instead of frowns of wondering perplexity, and been less eager for confirmation—the romance of the relationship being the more harped upon for the apparent lack of intention to take advantage of it.

Everybody, by this time, anyway, if not to begin with, knew who Richard Balfour and Bonnor Ramey were. And how anything but marriage could result from such a combination of favoring circumstances, nobody but Dan Cupid could have a shadow of doubt.

That the shadow of Doubt—so grimly important as to entitle it to a capital—was beginning to hover over the Veranda—a sentient body also to be spelled with a capital—was evidenced in the tone of uncertainty creeping into declarations concerning Balfour-Ramey intentions.

Could everybody have read the letter bringing about this meeting—so natural in appearance, so momentous in design—and psychically been aware of the construction put upon it by sender and receiver, the very mountains would have seemed in

labor from the convulsions of gossip that would have shaken the Veranda.

DEAR DICK:

Your sudden impulse to return home, after a prolonged absence that has been as satisfactory as inexplicable to me, with the avowed intention of plunging into the social arena—for revenge, I take it, not being able to imagine compensation in hollow triumphs of convention for the touch of heaven you had in Cecilia—must suffer a check through the contagion of impulse to myself.

It may not have occurred to you in such light, but your homecoming is of tremendous importance to me, and sends little shivers of anxiety up and down my spine whenever I try to estimate just what degree of parental authority you purpose assuming. Four years of autocratic reign cannot be changed in a day to a democracy in which my power of ruling is vested in the good will of the few who form my constituency in this matter, and we must devise some form of constitutional monarchy that recognizes my divine right while acknowledging you the power behind the throne.

Give Cecil and me a few days of yourself in some quiet place, where we three may get acquainted really and truly—better than letters have enabled us to know each other—before we face the common enemy. I hope you know that I do not mean your family.

Taking your consent for granted, I suggest Lookout Mountain as a convenient place to which Cecil and I may hie ourselves naturally and be joined by you *en route* home.

Not being able to share with Cecil the responsibility of this last of letters innumerable, I must forego the dear familiar title of Godmother and sign myself simply

Your friend,

BONNOR RAMEY.

This letter had been less significant in the writing than in the reading—analysis of meanings and motives not having gone with composition, however close upon heels it had followed. But

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such analysis had plunged him who had been christened Richard the Third, and dubbed Dick the Doubtful, into the deepest quandary of his life.

The meeting had come about as planned—the child, godmother and nurse being joined by the father before his arrival was anticipated at home—but a mental disquiet, produced by the ambiguous letter, effected a strained attitude misleadingly different from the easy friendliness of their four years' correspondence.

Each struggled, almost too evidently, to regain the old footing—and found it, now and then, in brief, unconstrained companionship with the child. But the child-tie was being strained to the snapping point, and all the Veranda combined was not so racked with uncertainty as were these two with whom Fate was playing.

Nature has provided some very beautiful trysting places on Lookout Mountain for the upsetting of calmly laid plans, and Sunset Rock, with its conspicuous lack of privacy or other such element, is not the least dangerous of them.

Balfour and Miss Ramey, who were of all things avoiding any appearance of sentimental companionship, had sought this spot in order that—under the eye of the Veranda, scattered for evidence but to be united later for verdicts—they might complete the mutual understanding they had been approaching and retreating from for a week.

"The sun from the western horizon
Like a magician extends his golden wand
o'er the landscape.

Twinkling vapors arise; and sky and water
and forest

Seem all on fire at the touch, and melt and
mingle together,"

quoted the girl, half in impulse of never ceasing wonder at the soul-stirring influence of the daily phenomenon to be witnessed from this great rugged point, and half to make conversation with a companion whose moody silence was making him even more difficult than on the preceding days.

They sat down, not on seats pro-

vided by man, but on a shelving stratum of rock lifted by an expended throes of some deep and rending convulsion of nature, and yielded their eyes to idle wandering over the gray-green expanse of valley spreading out below them to an almost limitless horizon. Golds and russets and reds of late summer were beginning to be seen on the mountain sides, but the valley was as yet only a sunburned green, and owed its roseate glow to the flushing throes of expiring day.

Bonnor frowned in protesting thought, and suddenly exclaimed: "How could a poet have thought of sunset as the 'death bed of the day?' Is it not, rather, Phœbus Apollo's beautiful couch of rest, from which he comes forth in full glory again every morning after his refreshing sleep?"

Balfour looked at his companion quickly and seemed to feel the need of that over which he was brooding to be more imminent than ever.

"I am no good at that sort of thing," he shrugged mundanely, as if time or injuries had crippled his wings for flights of fancy.

"It is my forte," laughed Miss Ramey carelessly. "Like the brook, I could go on forever. 'Day, like a weary pilgrim, had reached the western gate of Heaven, and Evening stooped down to unloose the latches of his sandal shoon.'"

"May I ask you a question?" he interrupted nervously.

There was no hint of inward tumult in her mock-weary assent: "Have I refused to answer any of the hundreds you have been asking without permission?"

"They were about Cecil—this is personal," he laughed uneasily, hesitating to continue, and even frowning at her expectancy. "My courage has flunked," said he curtly—then in a gentler tone: "Let's rake over the ashes of the past."

"It is the hour 'when to sessions of sweet silent thought we summon up remembrances of things past.' Dick Balfour"—with more than a touch of

doubt—"would you blow upon a coal if you found a smoldering one?"

"No, frankly, Bonnor Ramey, I would not—fiercely as the blaze burned while it lasted—and to you alone could I confess this without the risk of being misunderstood."

They held each other's gaze for a moment while their thoughts flew back over the escapade which had left him at twenty-five the father of a motherless babe, and her at eighteen the godmother and protector of a child ignored by its father's family, destitute of maternal relations and forsaken by him in whose heart parental love lay crushed beneath resentment at the price of its unwelcome existence.

"God! It was a brutal thing to do!" he muttered in bitter self-denunciation. The sense of neglected duty, shifted responsibility, had awakened clamorously within him during these few days of companionship with his child—the handsome little lad who yielded the profoundest respect and admiration to his stranger-father, but turned with the love of his heart and the freedom of impulse to the godmother who was the light of his small world.

"I wonder, Bonnor Ramey, that you could find it in your heart to teach the boy to love and honor such a father."

"You forget that I shared with you the glamor of Cecilia. Cecilia Convent! . . . artistic impulse of cowed and mantled asceticism! . . . St. Cecilia Convent, our *alma mater*, her *only* mother, in fleeing whose maternal shelter—she to the worshiper awaiting her, I a worshiper at her heels—"

Balfour frowned. It was not the first time she had diverted him from self-accusation, nor the first time she had touched lightly upon the tragedy of his youth. Tragedy? Was it not, rather, a dream, a memory, an illusion but for the child and the burden of obligation beginning to bear heavily upon him?

Grief inconsolable would have been a pose, he knew, in the presence of his intimate correspondent of the past four years, with her knowledge of the

rapid consolation of youth in pastures new—free, even, from the responsibility she had transformed from a bitter memory into a complacent possession. No one had known better the exquisite loveliness of Cecilia Convent—the waif, the foundling, the nameless, doorstep discovery—but, also, she must have learned in recent proximity to, if not contact with, the proud Balfours, how hopelessly estranging the *mésalliance* would have proven. But he resented in her the recognition of that of which he himself was painfully conscious, even while admitting, without fear of being misunderstood, that he would not revive smoldering memories if he could. The brief episode had been romance personified, bliss incarnate, but had not been of a texture to withstand time and opposition. However, it was one thing for him, a Balfour, to realize what he had sacrificed for love, but quite another for the woman who—as school friend and fellow conspirator in the elopement, and foster-mother to his child—formed the only link between the past he wished to forget and the future he planned to live.

"You think I did wrong not to force my family's recognition of Cecilia and give her a chance to win them." His tone was assertive, yet tentative, too.

"I can understand how the blue blood of the Balfours froze in their veins at the thought of Cecilia without Cecilia's personality to counteract the chill," she admitted, without sentimentality for her dead friend or criticism of himself.

"But you do not understand the pride that would not let me subject her to—No, I was right. Had she lived, she should never have felt the need of 'recognition,' and as it is, I go back to my old life with no scores to settle. I may yet redeem myself; who knows?"

He tried to look carelessly unconcerned as he threw out this suggestion, but was disconcerted by the intimate curiosity of her unsurprised acceptance of the hint.

"You would marry to please them?"

"Yes, both if they please and whom they please, I think now," he said with blunt candor—which, to his hypersensitiveness, seemed deliberate brutality.

He had been chivalrous and considerate, if noncommittal, remembering always the self-sacrificing devotion to his child and his own indebtedness; but fencing seemed a waste of energy and nerve force with so direct cut-and-thrust a temperament, and the affair might as well be handled crudely as with delicacy. It would be time enough to settle about Cecil's future when that of the father was decided upon—and in the meantime there should be no mistake as to the character and intention of a second marriage.

"Have they mentioned anyone in their letters?"

Her catechizing sounded judicially cool, if palpably not indifferent.

Dick the Doubtful was not phlegmatic nor *blasé*, but warm blooded and impetuously alive to the future he was intending, and the Bonnor Ramey of a correspondence whose keynote had been Cecil possessed no likeness to this authoritative young woman who was assuming a supervision over father as well as over son. He was eight years her senior, but her lack of sensitiveness or else marvelous self-control gave her an advantage that chafed a nature like his, and good breeding alone enabled him to mask anger under shrugging indifference as he answered superciliously: "My mother and sister are not the kind to have devoted their infrequent and reserved correspondence to local gossip in which I could have no possible interest."

Prodigal wanderer in foreign lands though he had been for years, he was once more part and parcel of the old régime, worthy representative of the exclusive Balfours, flaunting lineage in tone and posture, and firmly closing the door of his life against the unconventional—four years of Old World ideas grafted on to Old South traditions making of him a sturdy oak impreg-

nable to brain storms such as had swayed and bent and dragged his youth.

For the first time since their meeting, a gleam of fun, of easy good fellowship, in eyes and manner, identified her with the writer of the chummy letters that had kept him in touch with his child despite selfish indulgence of grief, resentment, pride wounds even more than heart wounds, and left him to dally in the paths of pleasure while she toiled in the field of duty.

If he was Dick the Doubtful to others, still less could he foresee his own impulses. The feeling of security in restored *camaraderie* shamed his suspicions and warmed him into the old dependent friendship. But even she, knowing him through his child almost better than he knew himself, was caught off her guard by a sudden confidential and intimately appealing manner that imparted a fascinating boyishness to Dick Balfour in spite of his thirty years, his fatherhood and a worldly wisdom, social, geographical and experimental.

"Bonnor Ramey, I am going to ask you what I lacked courage to ask a while ago. What would *you* think of my marrying again?" the pronoun almost capitalized as well as italicized by his nearness and eagerness.

She caught her breath sharply and her eyes dilated beneath the hastily dropped lids, but her voice was coolly interrogatory as she inquired: "From the world's point of view, or that of the friend who witnessed the whirlwind of passion that swept your early manhood?"

He flushed hotly. "You are more of a woman of the world than I thought you . . . From the standpoint of the friend, of course, who saw me oblivious to ancestry or posterity in grasping a happiness such as comes to a person but once in a lifetime."

"You do not expect, then, ever to love again?"

"I have no other wish than to win back my mother and sister."

He was honest in his belief, but woefully ignorant of his own nature.

She studied the ground and retained her judicial tone and manner.

"What would be their requirements?"

"Birth and position unquestionably; beauty and wealth desirable."

"You are modest."

"We are not speaking of myself, but of my family!" he flared, so like Cecil's "We're not feedin' dods, but Tito!" that Cecil's godmother almost laughed aloud.

"O—h! Then any old thing will do you? I don't mean person, but arrangement."

"You know it wouldn't—I must honor and admire the woman I make my wife and mother to my child."

His words electrified her into a creature different from anything he had ever known. His thoughts of her had never been analytical—whether she were handsome or merely unusual looking, or what color of hair or eyes she possessed; now they were distinctly tawny, and he could almost see a velvety paw unfolding into tigress claws as she reached out suddenly, fiercely, and crushed against her breast the handsome boy who had bounded toward her with his familiar cry:

"My Bonnie!"

"Dick," she whispered softly, flushing, bending toward him, smiling beseechingly, "I was only teasing—it isn't for you to choose—you couldn't—you wouldn't give Cecil any other mother?"

Richard Balfour once had to dive overboard from a naphtha launch to escape an exploding tank, and calculate under water how far he must swim before he could hope to come to the surface beyond the expanding rim of a literal sea of flame. He thought and acted no less quickly in the present emergency.

"There had to be a certain degree of round-aboutness of approach, however, to lend piquancy to so foregone a conclusion," he laughed easily, with no hint of the rebellion in his heart.

The strange betrothal was prettily and characteristically sealed by the child taking a kiss warm from his god-

mother's lips and transferring it lingeringly to those of his father.

The Veranda's verdict that night would not be long in the rendering.

II

THE Triad was an ante-bellum dream in architecture, Colonial in style, English in solidarity and exaggeratedly "Old South" in spaciousness and expenditure. It was the pride and show place of this old Southern capital, and every Tom, Dick and Harry, Thomas, Richard and Henry, could tell you the history of the Balfours of the Triad for generations back.

When the grandfather of the present Richard Balfour had decided to construct a roof tree worthy of the young wife who had borne him the handsomest son and fairest daughter in all the sunny South, he had gone about overcoming obstacles with a sturdy energy that harked back to a remote Scotch ancestry and with an enthusiasm that linked him to the land of his birth. The old homestead, roomy and pretentious enough for several past generations of wealthy Balfours, had been torn down, carted to the rear and rebuilt into "negro quarters" that would give prestige to Balfour servants for two generations before the war should change all that and make of the cluster of cabins a "quality corner" in Little Africa.

The Triad—not a mansion with wings, but three distinct palatial residences—had magically grown in stately outlines of cream sandstone. A few magnificent trees had to be sacrificed, but otherwise the grounds—a park in dimensions—had been kept intact; which was well, for dead and gone generations of Balfours would have risen from their not distant graves had the pride of their earthly existence been wantonly despoiled. Richard Balfour the First, therefore, had but to plan structures worthy of such grounds and indulge his exuberant fancy in marvels of landscape gardening.

The central building had been designed

for the parental roof, the one on the right for the son, and that on the left for the daughter, when the two latter should grow up and require homes of their own. Nothing in the whole conception was more characteristic of the old *régime*—so soon to come to an end—than such far-reaching plans for infants in arms.

The War of the Rebellion came when the son was barely old enough to be drummer boy in the regiment of which his father was colonel. Wife and daughter were sent abroad, where the wife died of a broken heart when the news came of the fall of husband and son in their first battle. The orphaned Southern girl was made a daughter in the home and hearts of some dear English friends—a son of the family espousing her cause with such fervor as to come over to the States, enlist in the Southern army and fight for the beloved home bereft of its last male defender.

At the close of the war the three handsome residences composing the Triad, undespoiled of their rich contents, and the grounds, a labyrinthian jungle of shrubberies, blooming flowers and blossoming trees, were all to which Margaret Balfour remained heiress. She married her English "rebel boy," a major for his three years' service, on condition that he would perpetuate the Balfour name. He became Richard Balfour II, and unhampered by sentiment, so administered the remnant of the Balfour estate as to place it on a basis of recovery long before other ruined Southerners rallied sufficiently to perceive that the world had not come quite to an end.

The State needed a Governor's mansion. He sold the central building of the Triad, rented the "Left," and with the proceeds, together with reserved contents of personal value, fitted up the "Right" magnificently for his bride, and invested the surplus in bonds of a new railroad projected by a Northern capitalist who foresaw the needs of the New South just born.

When in the course of time a girl and, five years later, a boy, were born to

Major and Mrs. Balfour, they saw in the distant future the possible realization, in part, of the dream of the Triad's founder. The "Left" should be held in trust for the little Madge and the "Right" for Richard III.

Madge grew to beautiful womanhood, married and became mistress of the home designed by her grandfather for the Madge whose worthy offspring she was. Richard III—

It was Dick the Doubtful who now crouched in the depth of an easy chair amid this heritage of luxury and tradition and brooded over his second matrimonial fiasco.

His first marriage had shocked society but pleased himself; and he had felt that inasmuch as he had expended a lifetime's fervor and impetuous love in that one blissful year, it would be an easy concession to his mother and sister to make whatever alliance they might set their hearts upon—provided always that the lady pleased him. His was a temperament which not even an expended love could subdue into impersonal acquiescence. Yet he was frankly aware, in all his thinking upon a second marriage, of the predominating element of ambition to fulfill the requirements of family and friends—all of which had been outraged in his headlong passion for the beautiful child of the convent.

Bred, like his sister, Mrs. Dalray, who was conventionality incarnate, to believe that the prime earthly allegiance of those in their station belonged to that vague, paradoxically comprehensive and conservative element known as Society, his pride had suffered during these four years of retrospection almost as keenly for the indignity put upon it as for the blot his heedless love had made on the Balfour escutcheon, and the atonement suggested was a generous impulse worthy of a better cause.

That better cause seemed, for a time, to have been found in his prompt self-sacrifice to duty, in subordinating his own happiness to that of the woman who had given four years of her girlhood to the care of his child. But

a week of colorless contact with a mystifying nature had taken the glamor off his vicarious act. Bonnor's was a disquieting personality—now attracting, now repelling him, but never under any circumstances revealing again the emotional intensity suggested by her one fierce act of appropriation.

He was not inordinately vain when—though recognizing that the climax itself had been effected through maternal fear—he felt that the woman's heart had all unconsciously fed upon the resemblance to the child she adored, until he had become the complement of her girlish dreams and sharer of maturer plans of the four years she had devoted hardly less to him than to his child. Also, she had been too gay and contented the week following their marriage, which had taken place the next day after their betrothal, for the marriage to have been a sacrificial step to the possession of the child—though the manner of their honeymoon had not been such as to effect a realizing sense of the obligation assumed. But it argued lack of some kind—in heart or head—for her not to have recognized that his attitude toward her was abnormal even for a clandestine husband—yet in so arguing he failed to give himself credit for the control good breeding exercises over outward expression of inward struggles. . . Did she consider his a burned out passion, a spent emotion, a life from which only placid friendship could be squeezed, that she was contented with so little and regarded his sacrifice so lightly? Or was her own nature lacking in depth, in force, in potentiality? She was a woman of twenty-two, but seemingly as immature as a girl of eighteen. Had four years of absorption in a child dwarfed instead of developed her? Was it possible that the child, not being her own, might have been a guardian over girlish slumbers, keeping her thoughts from other men in their concentration upon the father of the being she loved best on earth? Such a condition would make it worth while trying to awaken her if there were no one's disappointment but his own to be con-

sidered. But in his pessimistic mood it was easier to believe that Fate had merely avenged his early spendthrift love by mating fiery impulse with dull hebetude.

He slipped yet farther and more hopelessly down into the depths of the ancestral chair that, with its memories and associations, formed a Slough of Despond into which he emptied all the mistakes of his life.

Afterwhile, insensibly, he was comforted by the mere fact of being in possession of that which should have been his five years before. He had had the impulse to take Cecil and Bonnor and flee abroad again in perpetual expatriation, but the one act of duty toward his child's godmother had set in motion a whole succession of neglected duties toward mother, sister, home, friends and his own name and future. Instead, therefore, he had sent a telegram announcing his marriage to Miss Ramey, his child's godmother—thinking the designation necessary lest his family might not at once place her—and requesting, so briefly as to sound almost peremptory, that the Right be opened to receive them within the week.

As the message had conveyed no intimation of their proposed whereabouts in the meantime, no letters of condemnation or perfunctory congratulation or even affectionate assurance of welcome, in case time and absence had worn out opposition, reached him to dispel ignorance of how his second marriage had been received. The fact that it had not been made public—as papers from the capital indicated—might argue either that his family were hostile or else were awaiting his coming to lend as much dignity to the situation as possible.

While the marriage had been so secret that not even the Veranda had suspected more than a betrothal, he wondered that some vigilant reporter had not chanced upon the recorded license. He had had an uncomfortable moment when the representative of the capital's biggest daily had recognized Miss Ramey and lifted his brows significantly upon being introduced to

Cecil's father. Bonnor had hurried him away, urging something earnestly against which he had laughingly protested with gestures of much despair.

Balfour had blessed the impulse that had made him act while the sense of duty was strong upon him, and he had watched the papers for a few days with more of curiosity than anxiety. The incident had impressed him, however, with the fact of how little he knew of the woman he had married, outside of her own letters.

Up to Cecilia's death her history was fragmentarily known to him as that of an heiress, to what amount he had never known, so far as he could now recall, who had been allowed to do pretty much as she pleased by an uncle more concerned with politics than his guardianship. Having no settled home while the relative in question was in the Legislature, Congress or serving his constituency in some capacity or other, she had been left year in and year out at the convent boarding school, from which she had been expelled for aiding in the elopement that had brought down upon the school the displeasure of the *élite* patronage of the entire capital city and contracted the Balfour kingdom in one brow of woe.

If during his four years' absence she had done anything but summer, winter, eat, sleep, play and live for Cecil, she had not thought it important enough to write about. True, she had informed him when her uncle had been elected Governor of the State the previous winter, and one of life's little ironies had brought Cecil to live temporarily in his ancestral home, close neighbor to haughty relatives who had ignored his existence, but he had written her such hasty and peremptory instructions to keep his child in the background of any official life into which she might be drawn by her uncle's position that he was inclined to believe she had not availed herself at all of this opportunity to get into society. He knew she could have done so. For in most Southern capitals, official position gives *entrées* for the time being into the most exclusive

circles, from whatsoever obscurity the office holder may spring and to which he generally returns when, at the expiration of the term, man and office are once more differentiated.

He had tried to learn from her what attitude his mother and sister had taken toward his child when politics had made neighbors of them, but she had answered evasively that they had gone farther South the winter of the Inauguration and remained till called home by the long and dangerous illness of Mr. Dalray, his brother-in-law, which had been of a nature to prevent any interchange of civilities between the two families. She had taken Cecil up into the mountains very early that year, and they had not been back at the Executive Mansion long when his letter, preceding him by only one steamer, had announced his expected arrival in Baltimore the first of September. She had written him to meet her at Lookout Inn—and thereafter her life had been his life, and the future was for him to learn.

He had striven loyally the week past to forget the idle dreams of social supremacy he had indulged in for a second Mrs. Richard Balfour; but the influence of his stately home, in which he had but to close his eyes to recall his proud mother with the grace and hauteur of a Colonial dame receiving the beauty and chivalry of the South, overcame the stoic acceptance of his frustrated ambition, and he got up from his chair with a suppressed oath and went in search of forgetfulness in sleep.

III

ELEMENTS of tragedy often come out of the alembic of humor the purest comedy.

Certainly all the requirements of domestic disaster were present to Richard Balfour in the homebringing of his second bride. Bride! The word that conveys so much was less than meaningless to him.

The marriage had been nothing more

than a well-bred betrothal—his chivalrous treatment the expression of indifference, almost repugnance, rather than consideration for her or even her fair name while the world still knew her by it.

The butler was the first person before whom she had been accorded her new title, and Cecil's nurse had collapsed in the doorway with open-mouthed, pop-eyed delight when she had overheard.

"Lan's sakes alive, honey," she had whispered shrilly, hugging her young charge in excited celebration, "did you know Miss Bonnah was yo' sho' nuff mother? Who'd 'a' dreamt it!"

They had arrived late and unannounced—Bonnor and Cecil being shown to their rooms at once, but it was far past midnight when his lonely reminiscences came to an end and he sought his room, thinking bitterly how he was spending the first night under the same roof—and that his own roof—with his acknowledged wife.

He wondered if she were tranquilly sleeping, or wide-eyed with resentment at such neglect.

As he dropped behind him the heavy curtains that by night made of the hall recess an anteroom to the bedchamber and dressing rooms of the master and mistress of the house, he stopped to listen. He would have welcomed any sound indicative of anger, grief, chagrin, feeling of some sort. The sickening fear was creeping into his mind that his sacrifice had been premature and unnecessary; that he could have insured her the continued charge of Cecil in some other way and at least retained his freedom. The silence was, therefore, not reassuring.

After a while the expression on his face, clearly reflected in the mirrored doors of the brightly lighted anteroom, indicated a change in motive for listening—the frown of disappointment smoothing into momentary reflection, which broke in a feeble smile and ended in a nervous laugh.

It had awkwardly occurred to him that he did not know which was his wife's and which his own dressing

room, and he lacked courage to risk blundering in upon her at that time of night and under the circumstances, in case she had declined to make herself at home in the nuptial chamber uninvited.

He could study his own hesitation in the triple mirror effect of the three doors—exaggerating and multiplying his every movement—and could fancy Bonnor on the other side of one of them, waiting for the bridegroom that had forgotten to come.

The situation was tragically comical, and would have made Lares and Penates weep if the victim had not possessed a saving sense of humor—whereupon Tragedy folded her gloomy wings, and Comedy presided over the remnant of that strange nuptial night.

He knew, of course, that the room on the east had been his mother's and the west room his father's, with the spacious bedroom between, facing south for breeze in summer and sunshine in winter, but he had forgotten to inquire about arrangements before dismissing the servants, and he had lingered in the familiar old library where he might wrestle unrebuked with the blue devils that had had him in their grip.

In his uncertainty and hesitancy he stood gazing from right door to left and from left door to right, fearing that the Jonah of his matrimonial bark might have instigated obliterating changes in apartments hallowed with memories his mother would wish to keep sacred, and feeling more and more loath to face a situation of his own making.

Suddenly, with smiling inspiration—such as came to Cecil sometimes and suggested compromising on candy when undecided between fruit or cookies—he turned neither to the right nor the left, but advanced straight ahead to the central door, turned the big glass knob noiselessly and entered.

A night lamp with rose-colored shade served the practical purpose of affording light enough to prevent groping, but to the man's sense of intrusion it seemed to convert the room into a sanctuary.

The canopied piece of mahogany he

remembered as more suggestive of a cat-falque than a nuptial couch had been replaced with twin beds of dull brass, draped in soft, creamy stuff he vaguely recognized as silk and lace. A pleasantly surprised, sweeping glance revealed everything else of a corresponding modernity. The house had not been occupied since Madge's marriage—his mother having taken up her residence with his sister in the Left after his elopement and exile—and so complete and transforming a change in the limited time accorded revealed eager and purposeful hands in the preparation for himself and his bride.

His mother or Madge, or both, had succeeded in conveying to him, in the most delicate way imaginable, their affectionate acceptance of his erratic matrimonial ventures. Even more—he felt that they realized his position and placed honor above family pride. And, too, it might be that they held themselves partly responsible for the situation, in not having recognized and adopted his child, and thus prevented the embarrassing obligation. While the second marriage was a logical sequence of the first *mésalliance*, it was his family's attitude toward his child that had made it an inevitable one.

The deftly conveyed assurance of sympathy and understanding quieted the rebellion within him as nothing else could have done, and the absurdity of hesitating to enter the apartments of the woman to whom he had been married a week completed the rout of blue devils and imbued him with a spirit of adventure more characteristic of Dick Balfour than had been the manner and actions of Mr. Richard Balfour the eventful two weeks he had spent on his native heath.

He crossed the room with neither stealth nor noise—that he might not awaken Bonnor if she were asleep nor startle her if she were awake—and stood close beside her bed, observing her as he had never done before. He was seeing her for the first time in dainty feminine frippery. There had been no evening dressing up at the Inn. It was late in the season and the moun-

tain air was sharp. Bonnor, in her short skirts, modish blouses and heavy boots, had impressed him as dashing rather than dainty, and her lack of sentimentality had preserved for even a secret marriage the appearance of an engagement of long standing.

The rose glow of the night lamp, the pink ribbons in round-necked, short-sleeved *lingerie*, the kimono and bedroom slippers (only half the size, apparently, of her walking boots) all with the same color scheme, revealed to him why her eyes and hair had impressed him as "tawny" only that one time when all the blood of her body had rushed into her face at the betrayal she had been forced to make. The summer's tan had perhaps accentuated the impression of anæmia which he had had of her physically as well as emotionally; but her recognition of the necessity of a pink reflection over ocher to prevent yellow gave promise of effective gowning. He wished that she would awake suddenly and discover him, that he might note the effect upon her eyes. He believed they were gray—or pale blue—but he recalled times when they had been darker—purplish or brown, he could not remember which. He decided they must be hazel, to have effected the "tawny" appearance. Anyway, it was not a vital matter, and there would come a tomorrow. He kissed her lightly, his heart warming toward her in spite of disappointed hopes, and went to his dressing room comforted by the conviction that he had pursued the only course open to an honorable man.

He was worn out with the day's traveling in a stuffy Pullman through an atmosphere enervating and oppressive after mountain air, and spent with emotions awakened by old surroundings; but he fell asleep with Hope caught and shut close in his heart that had loosed its Pandora contents beneath his ancestral roof.

IV

THE morning proved the reflections of the night before well founded. Femi-

nine things were distinctly becoming to Bonnor, and Dick was surprised to discover that blue—royal blue, blue ocher, smalt, though he did no such differentiating—with a lot of cream lace, was quite as much her color as warmer shades. He wondered if it was consciously or unconsciously that she allowed for the difference in effect between the shades of night and warm, sunshiny daylight. An artistic temperament might compensate in part.

If the proud, perhaps pitying, resignation of his family were not yet to be faced, he might have been comparatively happy in his self-sacrifice. Again the temptation to steal away with Bonnor and Cecil and lose themselves in the Old World was strong upon him; and, without knowing it, the feeling helped him to greet his bride with some degree of appropriateness. His embrace was not such as to endanger the freshness of her costume, but she flushed very prettily as he held her at arm's length and surveyed her.

"Our Southern climate gives you womenfolk a big advantage over your Northern sisters."

"A *propos* of what?"

"Your elaborately dainty or daintily elaborate morning frock. Anywhere north of Dixie it would serve as a party gown."

"A trifle overdone, perhaps—but the occasion justifies it, don't you think?"

"Assuredly! I merely deplore the smallness of the company."

"That will be the least of our troubles!" she shrugged with a *moue*.

Again he realized how little he knew of his wife's social status. He began to fear a quantity rather than a scarcity of acquaintances, yet it was difficult to imagine Bonnor "popular" even in the "official set." He shuddered, and concealed it in a shrug of sympathy.

"I hope we may be left alone until after family reconciliations at least. I've got to seek a pardon from the Governor the first thing, I suppose."

"Should not 'the return of the

prodigal' have precedence? Oh," she breathed excitedly, "how I should love to be the one to bring you back to your mother!"

He took her words literally, and grew cold all over at the suggestion. He had planned to slip away at the earliest possible moment and throw himself at his mother's feet, penitent for the past and begging her help for the future. The awkwardness, the chill, the constraint of Bonnor's presence at that meeting was not a thing to be thought of. The result would inevitably prove disastrous—she so little knew his mother. Both head and heart rebelled at such lack of tact, and even more bitterly he resented her tendency to appropriate himself and all that was his. He became stubborn.

"My family rejected Cecilia; let them come to us."

"They are coming!" she exclaimed softly, with an indrawing of her breath, and arose from the table hastily.

Richard Balfour grew white to the lips as he sprang to his feet and stood leaning against the table, his serviette clutched in one hand and the other showing tense muscles against the glistening mahogany. Years of separation and estrangement were to be bridged in a moment of time, a meeting, a glance into the eyes of loved ones not seen for five long, estranged years—four of them amidst the dangers of travel and one of resented happiness with the wife they would not accept.

Cecil darted in ahead of the butler and announced shrilly: "Dranmuver and auntie!"

Bonnor captured him and stood waiting—at bay, it seemed to her husband, as he looked across at her—and the shock of realizing that she was not going to prove equal to the situation stilled the boyish trepidation of the prodigal and sent him to meet his people with a manly self-assertion that was very pleasing to his critical sister.

He could not help yielding for a moment to the impulse to hide his eyes against his mother's soft, fragrant neck and feel her arms about him as of old, while Madge's non-effusive greeting, in

a perceptibly increased drawl, completed the bridging of the gulf.

"How d'y'do, Dick? Impetuous as ever, I see, but no longer Dick the Doubtful! Everybody knew what you would do in this case, and you hit upon the only possible method of affording us a surprise. Run along, Cecil, and tell Pompey to drive you around the circle—I want Bonnie's undivided attention for a moment. There are weighty things to be discussed."

Mrs. Dalray's monopolizing flow of banter covered her brother's emotion and the meeting between rival individualities that had not come together over grandson as they might now over the son.

"Whose idea was it? Awfully clever whichever of you thought of it." She looked from Bonnor to Dick, and back again, unable to decide between blushes and a scowl.

"We don't tell all we know," Dick laughed easily, intercepting what he feared was an imminent confession on his wife's lips.

He was far from being as happy as the auspicious beginning warranted. He felt like a puppet, dancing to invisible strings. It was very apparent there was no intimacy between his family and the woman he had married, close neighbors though they were, and his sister's *nonchalance* impressed him as a tactful making the best of things. It galled him to discover that others had seen his duty before it had appeared to him. They could not know that he had not inflicted his child upon his girl-wife's friend, but that she had appropriated Cecil as she had done himself—interposing herself as complement to Cecilia dying as to Cecilia fleeing, and gathering into her own hands the reins of his life when they had been trailing in grief and humiliation.

Mrs. Dalray did not push her query. "Have you seen the Governor?" she asked, inconsequently; "but of course not—you aren't even through breakfast, and no one is supposed to know of your arrival. We are indebted to Cecil. He hailed us as we were driving

by and informed us that Bonnie had 'brought fahver home.'" Mrs. Dalray laughed her pretty, drawling, guttural laugh that had a touch of irony in it.

Dick's innermost self flinched, as a thoroughbred at the prick of a spur, but his frown seemed mere pretense as he observed carelessly, "We apparently have an incipient reporter in our family."

"That reminds me! *How* have you succeeded in keeping it out of the papers?" Genuine curiosity imparted unusual swiftness to Mrs. Dalray's speech.

"Ask Bonnor!" retorted Dick, as unexpectedly to himself as to the others, and he turned to his mother with a quick break in his voice as he whispered, "Dearie, dearie, it is good to have you love me again!"

He was sorry the next moment, however, that he hadn't listened for his wife's answer—for it seemed that she could explain, and Madge was drawling: "Delicious! . . . We were wise, the Governor and ourselves, in leaving the *dénouement* to you . . . the levee to-night—how opportune!—really perfect, my dear girl!"

Bonnor uttered a little dismayed ejaculation. "But what shall I wear?"

"Haven't you a trousseau?"

"How could I have a trousseau when I didn't know there was to be a wedding?"

"Oh—h! Then my brother's sudden appearance on the scene took you by surprise, also? Someone must have warned him. I should have done so had I known his address the past six months."

Bonnor cut short her sister-in-law's musings. "I have a gown that will answer. Fortunately, this is the beginning of the season and I had planned to launch Uncle Guardy with a whoop and hurrah, as Tishy says. We were such green country folks last year at the Inauguration, you know."

Madge's shoulders went up in a movement Dick could not interpret—perhaps only to adjust her boa preparatory to leaving; but every gesture was full of significance to him now, and he was too furious to trust his voice in com-

monplaces. Such consummate maneuvering! Such confident egotism! She had even provided a gown and timed their return for a spectacular entering of the social arena. And he had thought he had married her through chivalry and gratitude! Why, she had married him—royally, as one accustomed to having her way. He knew of but one all-powerful influence in a society where there were no hereditary rulers, and he felt that if it was in store for him to learn that Bonnor Ramey had thus established her sway in one short year over this old Southern capital, even conquering his haughty, sharp-tongued sister—though, thank God, his mother seemed not to have yielded!—he would repudiate the marriage and fly with his child to the uttermost ends of the earth.

He had come back eager to take his place and hold it honorably, manfully, as the men of his race had always maintained their positions in society, in affairs of State, in interests of the community, and to be regarded, worthily, as the head of his family, as men in Southern homes are still regarded. Instead, he was being made to cut the figure of a disobedient, degenerate, last representative of an old family, purchased with a parvenu "pile" made from soap, beer, hides, God knows what, and used for the social exploitation of rotten political greatness.

The strain of reunion and adjustment was felt more or less by all, and the visit was tactfully brief.

Mrs. Dalray offered to drive them over to the Mansion, but Bonnor said they would finish their coffee and go a little later when the Governor would be through his morning audiences.

They stood for a moment under the wide *porte cochère* overlooking a sweep of lawn, redolent of cut grass and tropical bloom, and mingled with *au revoirs*, with comments on the surpassing beauty of landscape made by the Balfour, Dalray and Executive grounds. All unconsciously the mother poured oil on the troubled waters of her son's turbulent soul by saying, in a gentle manner of proud triumph, "It com-

pensates for many years of bitterness of spirit for me to see my grandson at home beneath my father's roof."

Bonner's face revealed her quick, joyous gratitude, and Dick realized that, though both he and Fate had denied her the happiness of peacemaker, she had won for herself the guerdon of having brought to a Southern woman sweet resignation to defeat after more than a quarter of a century of haughty rebellion. He could forgive his mother's warm kiss and embrace, yielded on such grounds, while resenting more fiercely than ever the force in Bonnor that enabled her to bend everything to her purpose.

When they were alone again and the butler had brought them hot coffee, Dick said, with bitterness and chagrin he was not able to conceal: "What was your object in keeping me in the dark in regard to—er—all this?"

"Meaning Cecil and your family and—and—me?" she asked, coloring, and her heart still beating a little rapidly from the unexpected pressure of the elder woman's arms. "I hardly know—except that there was never before much to tell—that is, nothing pleasant. We did not meet just at first, you know, because of their absence, and then Mr. Dalray's long illness; and afterward your mother couldn't understand the utter impossibility of my giving up Cecil—"

"My mother wanted my boy?" he demanded angrily.

Bonner misunderstood. "It was only natural that she should—but I couldn't—I couldn't! I wrote you, however, of her wish; but that trip of yours into the interior of Africa cut off communication so many months that my letter must have gone astray; and when I next heard from you, you were coming home, and—and—that is all."

"But there is much that you might have told me the past two weeks—about your own social prominence, for instance, and—er—people's interest in our affairs."

She went white where he had expected crimsoning, and she asked

falteringly: "Can't you understand, Dick, why I shouldn't have liked to be the one to tell you those things?"

"I might perhaps, if we were really married."

"Aren't we?"

"Oh, yes, fast enough, by law!" he laughed, enjoying his natural mastery. Then cynically: "But what sort of a honeymoon have we had? Do you *feel* married to me?" He set his teeth hard. She wasn't a woman to feel anything but satisfaction in domineering. Her nature was as deaf to the siren song of love as if her ears had been sealed from birth. And he was only thirty, with much to give and furiously craving the privilege of choice. How irrevocably lost was that privilege was impressed upon him by her insistent answer:

"I feel supremely happy to know that no one can ever take Cecil away from me," and she smiled the familiar and now more intelligible smile that had so often puzzled and irritated him during those two weeks of strange companionship.

V

THE visit to Bonnor's guardian was not destined to add to Dick's complacency. From the moment his eyes rested upon the tall, white haired Governor, with the aquiline nose and piercing eyes—why he should have conceived him bristly and *bourgeois* was one of the many accumulating problems—he felt that another bar against his freedom had been welded.

The Governor grasped his hand warmly, and retaining it, sent a penetrating glance into his innermost soul, he felt, but he bore it unflinchingly because of his consciousness of rectitude in this marriage, whatever circumstances might yet make of it.

The elder man's eyes softened and his grip relaxed. "I have long suspected the whereabouts of my girlie's heart," said he, with emotion, "and I am content that it should be so well

bestowed. The child's money has been a sore anxiety—"

"Go right on with your writing, Guardy; we'll be back in a minute—I want to show Dick my 'refuge in time of trouble,'" cried Bonnor, seizing Dick's hand and fairly dragging him after her as she called back her breathless explanation. She had seen the look on his face, and, with an instinct born of the moment, felt she must have him amidst more personal surroundings when she made the confession that could be delayed no longer.

"Ah, my boy, you go to her holy of holies!" called his Excellency after them. "You are favored of the gods—or goddess."

Hardly was the door closed behind them in an apartment from which a Cleopatra, a Semiramis, a Bernhardt or a Duse might have emerged, when Bonnor began a hurried, embarrassed confession.

"I was afraid you would be influenced by my frightful lot of money, Dick—that you would be proud and foolish and let it blind you to the sweeter reason we two had, in Cecil, for marrying. Nearly everybody seemed to take it for granted we were engaged, and I didn't care, because I didn't know when you would be back—or if ever you'd be—and, anyway, I couldn't marry anyone else, or let you, and risk losing Cecil. So I got you to meet us up in the mountains—where we could, perhaps, get—get committed to each other before my monstrous wealth and all the things people were saying could make you stubborn, just to prove to yourself and others that you were not cold and calculating and—and, like what you tried to make me believe. Of course I didn't dream of your rushing things so—and I can't understand that even yet, unless your foreign notions were shocked at my reckless disregard of Madam Grundy." She caught her breath with a little laugh and hurried on: "But I had been used to being considered engaged to you for a whole year—ever since we came to the capital to live, and

people made such an ado over our 'romantic relation'—and nurse and Cecil seemed chaperons enough."

She fetched up helplessly against something in his face. If he had heard what she was saying, certainly he was not heeding it in the strife within himself.

The dreaded thing had happened—the illumination he had been seeking—when the white haired guardian had feelingly referred to his ward's hazardous wealth; and Bonnor had witnessed, without understanding, what to Dick was the impotent struggle of an impulsive, ignorant, handicapped man against public opinion and a selfish, designing, resourceful woman.

Then he had been whisked off to her "refuge"—her "web," more like, for the fine threads she had been weaving steadily and skillfully and purposefully about him had resolved themselves into a beautiful network that, despite his resistance, was proving deadly fascinating.

This web which her uncle had called her holy of holies was a revelation of temperament—with its soft draperies, its rich coloring, its naïve passion in art, its warmth and perfume and luxury, expressive of the owner's unguarded impulses and inclinations, revealing an emotional nature unevoked as yet, unsuspected perhaps, but latent with potentiality. And he had not blundered upon the revelation, or intruded, but been brought there, by herself, with intention perhaps, as part of her scheme from the beginning,—and he felt himself yielding, longing to take her in his arms and smother her sleeping face with kisses, if only for the revenge of beholding the awakening.

The psychological moment was his—he realized it, the mastery of experience. He held out his arms to her—and waited. He had been forced, lured, tempted, until he was hopelessly—no, helplessly—enmeshed, and the overconfident spider should learn humility in the jaws of the dragonfly she had caught.

Bonnor had been gazing, fascinated,

many moments, and trying, with the limited knowledge she possessed, to interpret the changes in his face—trying to arrest the eyes wandering from her Dianas to her Apollos, to her tiger skins, cushions and couch, tapestried walls, incense jars and filtered light. When at last she did catch and hold them, her own darkened to the violet he suspected, her face lost all color, and her knees gave way beneath her.

He caught her in his arms and crushed her to him—kissing, kissing, kissing her till hardly any breath was left in her body, and her blood coursed like some wild thing—pounding in her ears, blinding her eyes and burning her cheeks.

He saw the awakening—and, holding her head in the hollow of his arm where no quiver of the sensitive face could escape him, he leaned over her and murmured slowly, cruelly, revengefully: "Think what it might have been, Bonnor Balfour, if we had sacrificed our hearts on the altar of Cupid instead of Mammon and the *convenances!*"

She struck him from her, with a fierce, inarticulate cry, and sobbed, "I hate you—I hate you!" while the look in her eyes made him feel like the despoiler of innocence.

He could not have explained why he laughed—unless he was suffering such exquisite torture himself that he loved the pain in her eyes. Perhaps he was afraid to pluck the arrow head from Cupid's wound lest it heal before she knew its nature, while in truth if love and hate were waging as sweet warfare in her heart as in his, he would not have signed a truce if he could.

But he dared not linger in such environment, or he would be on his knees imploring her forgiveness, pouring out the love that had welled up from unsounded depths while hers was just starting at its fountain head, and whispering words that might soothe her back into a soul-slumber whose memory of these physical happenings would be but a vague dream.

"Hate me all you please, my

beautiful tigress, but scratch me only in secret—for the world must never know."

"Oh, the world—the meddlesome world!" she rued through clenched teeth, then, converting a rending shiver—the death struggle of her illusions—into a shrug, she said coolly: "The only sin in our world is that of being found out. We must be on our guard. Come. Uncle will be expecting us."

VI

THE present Governor's levees, popular from the start because of the charming young mistress of the Mansion, had never attracted anything comparable to the crush of that night.

Bonnor had kept her promise to the reporter she had met at the mountain resort; and in lieu of the society column mention of Mr. Richard Balfour's return and his presence at Lookout Inn where Miss Ramey and Master Balfour were also spending a quiet week, she had given him a "scoop" of the announcement to be made at the Governor's reception that evening.

If anybody that was anybody were absent, it was because he, she or they were out of town and did not see a paper in time to catch a train for the capital.

A bridegroom seldom hopes or even cares to play more than second fiddle in his own wedding music, but none likes to be relegated to cymbals or drum. In spite of being haloed with absence and romance, Balfour felt himself a mere accessory to his bride and the adored hostess of the Mansion. He was admired and envied frankly, but also resented as an unequal opponent—almost an unfair one. He had misled by his prolonged absence, allowed vain hopes to disquiet minds that would have been set at rest by his presence on the scene, let men wreck their lives in pursuit of the unattainable, upheaved society by leaving unclaimed a prize for which all sorts

and conditions of wooers struggled in passion, ambition, cupidity, avarice, through the entire gamut of motives and emotions. Then, too, a victory that showed no scars of battle tinged envy with resentment where it did not awaken awe or respect, and Dick was to learn that, though possession be nine points of the law, it is not safe to rest one's case there.

He could have stooped and kissed the hem of Bonnor's gown, so regal did she look, arrayed as he had never before seen her, as she came toward him from her own dressing room at the Mansion; but the feeling was doused with cold disgust at the preparedness of it all, as they moved down the broad hall and stairway together and took their places in line to receive the endless stream of guests that would soon be arriving.

The revelation of her as a gracious, queenly hostess, first lady of the State, and the adored of too varied a following to be merely a golden idol, would have been compensation enough for this mixed social crush if he could have gotten back his feelings of the night before; but he had learned so much in those vivid moments of their mutual awakening that the more wonderful she became, the more of a puppet he regarded himself. And wounded vanity is slow in healing.

He was glad when he could at last slip away from the noise and light to a brief companionship with his own thoughts and a cigar, and he stepped through a French window onto the piazza off the ballroom, where the night air could fan his hot face and music soothe his jerking nerves.

"Dangerous occupation, my dear Othello, looking in from the gloom upon other fellows making love to your wife," shrugged Ira Irving, a boyhood friend, dropping down beside him. "They can't realize it all at once, you know. Takes time to break off a habit—longer than it seems to have taken you to acquire it. What happened, old chap? Get panicky—after four leisurely years of enviable security?" Irving was one

of those who resented the absence of scars.

If Dick could have guessed the shrewd suspicion under his companion's careless banter, his impulse would probably have taken the direction of kicking his friend off the piazza instead of seizing the opportunity to avenge some of the pricks his vanity had been smarting under throughout the evening. He was aware of what Irving had not yet discovered—that Bonnor was coming toward them on the arm of old Senator Murdock, who was notoriously deaf.

"What would you say," he confided in a clear, low voice, "if I told you I had no choice in the matter?"

"Jove! I should be more than half inclined to believe it."

"Then your ears, as well as your nose, would be too damned long for a biped!"

He confronted his wife hastily in the blaze of light from the doorway and took her hand from the Senator's arm, with smiling apology, drawing it firmly through his own and failing to remove his own hand at once. "This is our dance, I believe—if it isn't it ought to be. I haven't had all the advantages over the other fellows."

He felt by no means as calm as he appeared. Bonnor looked more as if she had received a heart stab than a vanity prick; and while he had no intention of letting her lull herself to sleep again, he did not care to have her eyes flying wide in any such look as she had just given him.

"One is sometimes tempted to answer a fool according to his folly," he whispered in a half-apologetic way, as they glided slowly among the crush of dancers.

"Fools and children may recognize, as well as speak, the truth."

"You don't for a moment imagine Irving took me seriously?"

"It was the truth."

"If I thought any such notion had stuck in his brain I'd dislodge it with a bullet."

"And scatter the information broadcast."

"Bonnor, you are unjust."

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"I—unjust? . . . You are—contemptible!"

"You say it as calmly as if you were paying me a compliment."

"We are in public."

"Then come with me—there are nooks galore about these grounds—where I can tell you that you are—adorable. . . . Why, sweetheart, I have loved you for *hours*,"—with an emphasis that brought the blood to her cheeks—"and am only waiting for the chance to kneel at your feet and worship you."

"Or bow down before the golden calf, as others have done before you?"

He whispered back savagely, "You don't believe that, Bonnor Balfour."

"Would you value the artistic opinion of one who scorned a picture on a deserted easel in the fields and then offered a fabulous price for it when signed and framed?"

"I never scorned you, my Oriental princess; I merely walked beside you in darkness till you led me into the light. Then I loved, and my love compelled yours. Deny it if you dare!"

"I was ignorant—and did not understand. You were experienced, and took advantage," she defended, in shamed admission; then added, with the quick self-control that baffled him, "but I am grateful to you for having stifled it at its birth."

"I could stifle you—"

"You are almost doing so."

He laughed as he released her—admiring but fearing the calmness that in the friction of daily companionship would be flint to the tinder of his nature.

As they strolled from the ballroom, with her hand resting lightly on his arm, their smiles and excess of color could have been attributed to dancing, and he might have been telling her what a delightful partner she was. Instead, he was entreating, in tones none the less eager because of the masked face: "Let's go home, my wife. It seems an age since breakfast—and as if the whole world had come between us."

"I can't leave. I'm hostess, you know. Besides—I think I'll stay with Guardy tonight."

He swerved to a shadowed part of the hall and turned her by both bare, white shoulders to face him. "Are you game, my dear girl, or merely a cold proposition?"

"I have been termed such a variety of things tonight that nothing rankles but being called your wife."

"A misnomer—of which I shall not soon again be guilty!" He left her abruptly and angrily.

The quick hush in the billiard room upon his entrance a few minutes later was hardly less embarrassing to him than to the men who so hastily resumed cues or neglected cigars.

"Speak of the Devil—" said Tommy Morgan—

"What has become of the remnant of brains cigarettes and women have left Lafe Merriwether?" Balfour inquired, ignoring Tommy's opening.

Quick glances were exchanged—some smiles, but more frowns—and several men at once asked why, after everybody had seemed to look in vain at somebody else to answer.

"I passed him on the stairs and, merely to be pleasant, told him he was the only chap here tonight that hadn't called me a sly dog or something."

"What did he say?" Tommy asked breathlessly.

"He said if I was playing innocent, I was playing the blankety-blank fool."

A general laugh went up—more nervous than merry, however.

"It's only fair to tell you, I presume," said David Langdon, "that we had only just succeeded, when you entered, in preventing Merriwether from blowing his brains out on your account." He pushed aside a Yale pillow that covered a pistol on the billiard table.

"He rushed in here, raving something about a dance—" began Jim Early.

"Which isn't so much to the point," interrupted Arthur McArthur, "as the mad threat he made while we were taking away his weapon. Avoid him for a little while—he's a hot-headed, but honorable fellow—for your wife's sake, of course, I mean, Dick."

"I don't understand—" Balfour

muttered, then bit his lips into silence. What he did not understand was how Bonnor Ramey had remained unconscious through wooings of fiery lovers like Merriwether. "I'm sorry, I mean, and am sure he could have had no cause—"

"Lord, no! None of us had!" said Ed Fitzhugh; "but Hope is like a fool sea gull, following and hovering, now up in the blue, now in the wave's trough, resting on nothing, but ever expectant till the ship is out of sight."

"Bravo! bravo!" they cried, welcoming the lighter turn to the subject, but Dick's nerves were on edge and he resented being shielded.

"Would it be indiscreet for me to ask," he inquired, with visible pique, "how many rivals I had among you?"

"The bunch!" groaned Tommy.

"Then I deeply regret, gentlemen, that—with such honorable competitors, I might not have been more worthy of her choice."

"Permit us to admire your humility while doubting your sincerity," said Ira Irving from the doorway, his tone questioning the compliment that had startled all present with its unhappy phrasing.

Dick himself was shocked into more manly self-control; and he proceeded to confirm the impression left by his nimble wits with a dignified, affable invitation to all to join him, in some of the Governor's best, in drinking to his wife's happiness in spite of her choice.

VII

DICK went home from the Governor's levee and spent what was left of the night in reconstructing his life on the basis of facts in place of theories.

When he realized, after a cigar or two in the library, that it had been only twenty-four hours before that he had sat in the same chair, in the same room, alone with chafing thoughts, with a wife under his roof whom he would gladly have had under her guardian's, and with her now under her guardian's

when he longed to have her under his own—when all this similarity and difference confounded him with what a day could bring forth, he got up as hastily as the night before and went to the apartments that might soften his anger even while intensifying his loneliness. He wandered from room to room, impatiently, softly or bitterly, according to the emotion of the moment.

Every place where she had rested, everything she had touched, whatever held articles that belonged to her, possessed the influence almost of her presence. She had spent but one night there, and the contents of but a single trunk had been shaken out, hung up, or folded away in the numerous and capacious drawers and closets destined for the lady of the house; but the fragrance of her hung in the atmosphere and appealed to his senses, making him touch caressingly the pink robe and nightgown the maid had laid out, glance with passionate regret at the pillow on which her head should have been resting, and finally driving him to the couch in her dressing room, where he lay a long time seeking a calm understanding of the forces with which he must contend and which were to make or mar his life.

He felt that every thought and act of the two weeks of his return, from his arrival at the Inn till his departure from the Governor's, had been a mistake or blunder—concealed, averted, or glossed over. What a disastrous thing his ignorance had been! If Madge had only written him! . . . What would his sister probably have told him? That Miss Ramey was the richest young woman in the South and he was unwise not to come home and make the most of her affection for his child? If so, he was more than thankful he had remained in ignorance, for knowledge of that sort would have kept him abroad indefinitely, perhaps, and as Bonnor had said, made him "stubborn." It both flattered and irritated him to be so well understood by her while she was yet a mystery to him. It would doubtless always rankle with him that he had been plastic putty

in her hands when he imagined Duty and Chivalry pedestalling him as a martyr, but he was generous enough to acknowledge that her innocent scheme had cleared him of all taint of mercenariness—naturally the *bête noire* of her existence. She might question his impetuous love, or, worse still, be repelled by the sudden passion that she could not know was simply a realization of long felt cravings of heart and nature, and it might be that she was hurt and indignant and angry beyond all previous experience; but such a state of mind might not be unbeneficial to a young lady who was overpetted, and spoiled with having her own way, and left in doubt about nothing except the disinterestedness of the grovelers at her feet.

He wondered if she were sleeping as dreamlessly in her maiden apartments as she had seemed to do the night before while he had stood beside the bed studying her; or was she so angry at him that he was more present to her consciousness than when she had been sharer of his home, sweetly ignorant of coldness and neglect?

A whimsical notion took possession of him, and he laughed softly as he got up and went quickly across to his own dressing room. He was only a very few minutes preparing for bed, and he went and stood by Bonnor's, looking down at the pillow as he had done when her head had rested upon it. "Poor little forsaken pillow!" he said tenderly and quite aloud. "I'll comfort you!" He separated the daintily embroidered sheets and slipped in between them. With an arm under the pillow and his face laid caressingly against it he was in dreamland within five minutes.

It was broad daylight, with the morning's discordant noises about him, when he awoke with a violent start and found himself sitting up in bed, holding the pillow as if it were a falling body he had caught and was supporting in trembling horror. In his dream Merriwether had shot Bonnor, and Irving was saying, "Better that than the life before her, poor girl!"

He looked about him, dazed; surely he had heard the words, even if the shot and the pillow were only things he had had on the brain.

He lay back and pressed his hands to his eyes. What did it mean—Irving's uncanny perception of things in regard to Bonnor? Why had he and no one else suspected the lack of love there had been at first? Not because of that piqued insinuation—the suspicion was latent or the words would have been construed differently. He alone had failed to be deceived by the cleverly averted disclosure in the billiard room. . . . Had his dream words any significance! Had Irving known there had been no engagement, known of the intended sacrifice? Was he a part of the sacrifice? . . . The incident of the "refuge"—had it been a self-delusion, a misconception; her awakening to the call of his love a shuddering recognition of what was demanded of her? . . . His had not been the only passion-transformed face she had ever seen; his not the only arms ever extended toward her—God!—but no man before had ever had the right to force his love upon her, to take bodily possession of her!

His brain ceased, for the time being, to struggle against such a cataclysm, and he lay still, hardly breathing.

A small hand touched him, hesitatingly, and a puzzled voice demanded, "Where is my Bonnie?"

He drew the little chap to him and answered, as if by inspiration: "Cecil will have to help father find her. Ring that bell, little man, and as soon as a shower washes the sandman out of my eyes we'll go together to storm the enchanted castle that holds our runaway princess."

Dick's knowledge of fairy lore was vague and limited, but the child's imagination outstripped the clumsy suggestion, and he pulled the bell cord so violently that Cæsar came running as if the house instead of the master needed the water turned on.

Balfour ordered coffee and a beaten biscuit brought to his room, and he made as short work of toilet and break-

fast as possible, Cecil literally kicking his heels outside in impatience for the adventure.

As they started upon their way, Dick experienced his first conscious dependence upon his child. All egotism had gone out of him—he would have been content then to know that he had no other rival than his child; and it would have had to be a different nature from Dick's not to have gotten a fierce undercurrent of joy out of the fact that nobody could take his child away from him, nor Bonnor from the child.

It was soon evident that the attack upon the castle was not to be made from the front—the lad being well acquainted with short cuts and strategic entrances.

The bypath chosen proved to be the broad road to enlightenment upon the heart relation of godmother and son. Every nook and corner, every curve and turn recalled to Cecil something he and Bonnie had seen, said or done at that particular spot; and judicious questioning elicited information that changed a woman's incredible sacrifice into a natural sequence.

Balfour realized now the glamor that had been over the absent father of this adored child, and grew sick at heart at the disillusionment he had effected willfully. Whatever had gone before or what was to follow, he knew that the moment of mastery had been in his grasp had he seized and held it instead of flinging it away in petty revenge. The thought wrung a groan from him.

"Dettin' tiahed? We most theah," said Cecil encouragingly. Cecil was a pronounced Southerner in his scorn of "r's" and "g's."

Following his small guide around to a side entrance, he found himself gaining admission to the Executive Residence unannounced, and he thrilled to the adventure as he realized the child's intention of seeking Bonnor in her own apartments. But his feet dragged on the threshold, in memory of Irving's dream words, and he saw the child rush in where he stood at gaze, in unangelic hesitancy.

Bonnor, in becoming deshabille, was

taking her morning coffee truly *à la Sybarite*, and Dick, with slight effort of the imagination, pictured her as Saint-pierre's "The Happy Saadia," a beautiful Egyptian half reclining on a couch, soft with cushions and skins, her face resting against a great open-jawed tiger's head and her ankleted limbs stretched in luxurious rest. Cecil springing to her embrace might easily typify the invisible Cupid her expectant eyes awaited.

"Why don't you come in?" Cecil demanded in surprise, and Dick followed up the suggestion as Bonnor rose and greeted him with a perfectly unconstrained "Good morning!"

Her tone and manner effectually dispelled nightmarish fancies, and he sat down by her and the boy, kissing the hand she extended.

"What you tiss huh han' fah? 'Iss is bettah!" said Cecil in disgust and explanatorily, as he took his godmother's face between his little brown hands and kissed her fervently and repeatedly on the lips. Still holding her face, he moved his head aside, with an encouraging nod to his father. Dick bent forward, and Bonnor, motionless, with closed eyes, felt his nearness . . . But only for an instant, then a velvety cheek slid down and rested against her lips.

"My Bonnie don't want to," said he.

"She is my Bonnie too," said Dick, angry with disappointment.

"She was mine fuhst!" flashed back Master Balfour spiritedly, and a retort was arrested on his father's lips by a side glance from Bonnor's eyes that drew his attention to a mirror opposite.

One does not readily detect resemblances to oneself, but Richard Balfour would have been blind indeed not to have seen in his child at that moment a miniature of himself.

"He has inherited my temper, along with the rest," he admitted a bit ruefully.

"Nature could not well avoid it in so exact a reproduction," Bonnor assented with the indifference of a self-evident statement.

"Are we so much alike?" he asked hopefully.

"I never encourage vanity—in men. Excuse me a moment, and I shall be ready to go—home," the word coming as an afterthought, perfunctorily it seemed to Dick, and falling on his heart like lead. She caught the look in his eyes—big, brown, wistful eyes, like Cecil's when she had to punish him, and as if the child now, instead of the father, had been the culprit, she took him in her arms tenderly, obliviously, and cooed words of limitless devotion.

The revelation was complete, and all there seemed to him left to learn was whether the sacrifice was to be borne with resignation or with endurance. A swift conviction came to him that his child, while undoubtedly the tie that bound them, was destined to prevent a complete union between them. Bonnor's feeling of ownership was exclusive. Cecilia's would have been shared with him.

An unmarried woman's devotion to a child committed to her care is more selfish, jealous and unreasoning than that of a mother. The latter's feeling of possession is a partnership one; the former's is absolute. But feeble and slow of birth as had been the parental instinct in him, Dick recognized and marveled at the maternal in her who had not borne the child, and the thought came to him stinging that his family's and the world's forgiveness of his boy's maternal blemish was due to the mother's having been lost sight of in the godmother.

Heaped up indebtedness burdens with gratitude unless lightened by love; and Richard Balfour told himself, with fierce determination to win his wife, that she had given him too much not to give all.

VIII

THE fall races were on at the Gentlemen's Driving Club, and the occasion was being used, as with all the season's limited amusements, for entertaining the Balfours.

Ira Irving was host to a box party of twelve. Harvey Mahon was to drive Irving's horse—pretty, clean-limbed Bonnie Belle, a trotter of unsurpassed local fame. The entries of the first day being altogether local, Bonnie Belle was picked to win, with Dorothy D.—owned and driven by Tom Farnley—as a strong second choice, and few others considered in the betting.

"Such an insipid name!" said Bonnor to Bonnie Belle's owner. "Could you not think of something strong and suggestive?"

"I preferred something as sweetly suggestive as I dared to make it," he replied, for her ears alone, with a careless laugh.

Of course money in the Irving box was on Bonnie Belle, and interest centered in her and Dorothy D., the only thing in the field to cause anxiety. When this class came on, there were few whose attention was upon anything else.

Irving, who naturally might be supposed to have a more vital interest in the race than any of his party, saw only in their preoccupation the opportunity to relieve his tongue of hot words that had burned on the tip of it for days. His quiet exterior covered a heart aflame with rage and envy.

"Why in high heaven's name do you bare your heart so openly to Dick Balfour?" he demanded in a savage undertone.

"It is wretched form—in public—isn't it?" she assented, with *naïveté* that was sheer mockery between such worldlings.

What her motive was, Irving had not yet divined; he knew only that she intentionally impressed upon him her great happiness, so frankly sometimes, though never obtrusively, as to bring a look of surprise into Dick's eyes if he were present. In another woman he would have thought it coquetry, and in still another a safeguard against a too insistent old lover. Had he doubted her love for her husband he could have understood her—as pretense her manner was perfect, but as candor it was baffling.

He used his chance position now—facing her, with his back to the others—to let his eyes, black as sloes, with the hardness and glitter of the polished sloe thorn, tell their oft repeated story as he denied her self-accusation: "Bonnor Ramey could not be guilty of 'bad form.'"

"Mrs. Balfour, please, Mr. Irving; I insist upon my new title."

"God knows you paid dearly enough for it!" he muttered, not inaudibly, though she ignored it.

"Look at Bonnie Belle! Isn't she a beauty? Harvey is handling her nobly—Dick's pique was pardonable; don't you think so?" reverting to their former subject. "No one likes his prerogative usurped. What did Tom Farnley mean by that maneuver? He lost a full length by it. It looks suspicious. Of course I never dreamed of his taking it so badly, my proposing to him, you know, but I thought it unfair that you men should have the cream off of all the pleasant sensations of life—and this of course would be my last chance. Dick should have followed my revolutionary lead and demanded time to think it over."

"He hadn't the courage—judging from what he told the men." Her manner and the confirmation of his bitter suspicions drove him to recklessness.

"Have you the courage to speak plainly, Mr. Irving?"

"I have not, my dear Mrs. Balfour—as blissful as it would be to possess, even for a moment, the power to quicken your heartbeats."

"Then I shall ask Dick. Dick!" she called.

"Not before these people, Bonnor—don't, I implore you—for your own sake!"

The last heat was being trotted amid wildest enthusiasm, and Balfour had not heard her call. Bonnie Belle and Dorothy D. were nose to nose halfway down the home stretch, as if in double harness; but the horsey element saw that whereas Bonnie Belle was let out to her limit, Dorothy D. was under a heavy pull, and Bonnie Belle's only chance lay in the nearness of the goal.

Hats were up in the air, handkerchiefs fluttering, men shouting, hissing, groaning, urging on the favorite, swearing at the rival, and Bedlam generally had turned loose.

A pickpocket here and there, and two others, took advantage of the momentary oblivion. Bonnor's eyes were fixed upon her husband, Irving's upon her. She turned on him abruptly, with a look of ineffable contempt.

"Insinuation is the weapon of a coward."

"I am a coward, where you are concerned, because of my helplessness to defend you against the insults of your husband. Can't you understand what I suffer in seeing the love I would sell my soul for thrust upon a man who openly regrets possessing it?"

"When? Where?" she whispered imperatively.

"Upstairs, at the Governor's!" he whispered back recklessly, exultantly, maddened with hope of disaster.

"What were his words—his exact words, as you value your honor?"

"It began in good-natured banter, but soon grew personal, and Balfour asked if all of us were in love with you. Tommy Morgan answered, 'for the bunch' as he expressed it, and Dick exclaimed—"

"Yes? Well?" as Irving hesitated, her eyes flashing a blue flame from a deadly white face.

"He said, 'Then I deeply regret, gentlemen—'"

The horses came down the home stretch at a terrific clip, Tom Farnley lashing Dorothy D. a winner by just enough to wrest the laurels from Bonnie Belle.

When the tumultuous uproar had subsided somewhat, but the excitement of wonder, chagrin and remonstrance was still intense in Irving's box, Dick turned and caught sight of his wife's face. He sprang to her side and, regardless of surroundings, exclaimed, "My darling, what is it?"

Irving awaited the *dénouement*, his teeth clenched and his nails pressing into the flesh. Someone observed in a

contemptuous aside that Irving took defeat badly.

"Avoid a scene, please, and call Dr. Griswold. I think I have broken my finger," said Bonnor quietly, and began removing her glove from the left hand.

Ira Irving looked on with a repressed groan. "My God! And I have accused that woman of being cold!" His eyes had darted to the finger that wore the coveted wedding ring, and he knew that the surmised fracture was no pretense. He also believed her quiet fortitude unassumed. How he must have hurt her, to render her unconscious of physical pain!

Dick got her away to their carriage with hasty excuses, directing that Dr. Griswold be found and sent to the house at once.

The open victoria, his solicitude and her suffering prevented questions and demonstrative sympathy until they had reached the privacy of their home, though his care and tender condolences were straining her composure to the breaking point. In her own room, he took her in his arms with eager words of inquiry and wonder, and when she shrank from him with a cry that wrung his heart he thought he had been awkward and had hurt her. Dick had few peers in the art of love making, and, ignorant of what had passed between Irving and her, he set about atonement for the awkwardness with a passionate persuasiveness that speedily reduced her to sobbing hysteria on his breast.

Dr. Griswold was there almost as soon as they; and when the finger had been set and dressed—Dick demanding an anæsthetic—and Bonnor was asleep in care of her maid, the doctor broke an embarrassed silence with: "Devil take these self-controlled women! Why didn't the dear girl in her excitement break the head of that cad, Irving, instead of her own finger?"

"Dr. Griswold—is Irving a cad?"

"Bless my soul, young man, how should I know? He passes for the decentest sort of chap, but—a case of Dr. Fell, don't you know? Don't like him; never did; don't need any reason. Look after my patient, and don't let

me catch both of you in hysterics again."

Dr. Griswold laughed slyly and bowed himself out.

IX

THE ring had proven a complication to the broken finger, and Bonnor found in it an excuse for evading much social routine for a week or so following the accident, as well as for indulging a nervous depression that changed Dick, for the time being, from a too ardent lover into a cheerful companion.

Of course there had been troublesome questions as to the how of the occurrence, but she persisted in declaring, with unimpeachable candor, that at the moment of Bonnie Belle's defeat she had been so filled with rage and chagrin that something had to break—and no one, however incredulous, saw in her words a *double entente* except Ira Irving. Dick clung to the recollection of Dr. Griswold's comment on nervous excitement in women of self-control, and tried not to complicate his mental condition with jealousy.

Returning from a drive one day, they found the library in possession of the very homeliest son of Mars Dick thought his eyes had ever beheld. Bonnor advanced with eager, outstretched hand; and Mars, not noting the sling in which the other was carried, drew himself up in the most military of attitudes and threw into his eyes a look of exaggerated reproach, while he took gingerly hold of the single hand, raised it in midair and gave it an up to date wobble.

"How d'y' do?" Then in a heart-broken voice of deep tremolo: "Did Spanish bullets spare me for such as this?"

"Don't you see?" nodded Bonnor toward the disabled member. "I'm sorry I can give you but half a welcome."

"Dear girl, forgive me!" he murmured, taking her face between his large hands and kissing her on the cheek. "How are you, Balfour? Your

wife seems to have kept all knowledge of me selfishly locked up in her own breast."

"You certainly have the advantage of me. I infer, however, that you are a kinsman, but, sir, of what name and what degree?" Balfour replied challengingly.

"He is my—"

"Thy elder brother I would be,
Thy father, anything to thee,"

quoted Mars, as Bonnor hesitated.

"I was about to say quadruple cousin—our fathers having married each other's sister, or mothers each other's brother, as you please; but that, I believe, makes us only double cousins, after all. Anyway, it is with sisterly pleasure that I introduce my almost twin in name—Ramey Bonnor, Captain of the Tenth United States Volunteers. That you will be friends goes without saying."

The men greeted each other cordially, and, without questioning intentions, the jovial officer was appropriated as guest indefinitely.

Captain Bonnor joined his cousin on the veranda a little later; and, finding themselves alone, said triumphantly, "Everybody was right!"

"'Everybody' usually is. But *à propos* of what?"

"Balfour's getting you."

"And, incidentally, my getting him."

"Pshaw! There weren't even betting odds on that!"

"Omnipotent Plutus!"

"He doesn't look like a cad," said the soldier, frowning.

She laughed softly and bent close to his ear. "Let me whisper a secret: he knew absolutely nothing about those oil fields and mines."

"Geel! Where's he been?" Then with quick appreciation he said: "I'm glad—for your sake, girlie. Didn't have to lose any sleep over that question with him, did you? Now I understand that hurry up business at the little chapel in the mountains. Slaying *bêtes noires* is sportier than killing with envy. Anyway, society had more

to talk about than the regulation affair could have afforded."

Bonnor was spared comment by Dick's joining them. The Captain took him in with a prolonged inventorial stare.

"Sizing me up?" Balfour asked good-naturedly. Somehow this big, ugly soldier had awakened in him a set of emotions hitherto dormant, never having had a brother, and he felt ready as a schoolgirl to swear eternal friendship.

Bonnor left them together.

"I am puzzled, cousin-in-law," Captain Bonnor complained, shaking his great shaggy head whimsically—a shagginess of the footballist rather than the artist, though the lean, smooth face indicated temperament. "Some things I've heard make me wonder if you, of all persons—say, would you mind telling me who were your correspondents all those years you were lost to sight, but to memory dear?"

"Bonnor and my mother and sister. Why do you ask?"

"Your family didn't—er—tell you much about Bonnor, did they?"

"Never mentioned her name!" laughed Balfour, catching the drift of the Captain's curiosity and having a motive in keeping it in that channel. "The fact is, I had no letter from either of them after they met Bonnor. I was in Africa with an exploring party."

"Then Bonnor was your only informant about herself?"

"Not even was she that. She was Cecil's chronicler above all else; but her letters revealed between the lines a charming personality that made for warm friendship between us, and somehow wrung from me long egotistic letters that left her as little as there was much for me to learn upon our meeting. Of the evolution of the schoolgirl friend of my wife into the social idol I discovered my bride to be upon our return to civilization, I hadn't an inkling—and, to tell you the truth, my dear Captain, I've been so ashamed of having appropriated the most awesome creature in all the South in such an ignorant, underhand

way, that I haven't asked questions for fear of exposing the fact of its having been a case of 'fools rush in where angels,' and so forth, you know."

He was not striving after effect in his simple confession, and was taken very much by surprise when the big soldier sprang from his chair, upsetting it in his enthusiastic lunge at him, and seized him in a fraternal embrace, swearing in picturesque military Spanish that his fair cousin had the levellest head the Lord ever put on a pair of beautiful shoulders, and knew a man when she saw one. "I never hoped to be able to congratulate her on the husband she'd get—she ran such a deuced risk of cads, poor girl! But you are a lucky chap, Richard Balfour, and what is better, you deserve your good fortune!" His voice broke in a sincerity that betrayed how much at heart he held his cousin's happiness.

Dick writhed beneath the undeserved praise, but he could disclaim merit only by a confession that would have been the keenest wound to his wife's pride he could have inflicted. If it were her wish to conceal the sacrifice and humor the romantic version of a self-deceived public, he could not show greater loyalty than by accepting, before the world, her pretense of devotion as if it were genuine as his own, and he felt sure the big, brotherly cousin was the last person in the world she would have had know the truth. He therefore skillfully diverted the excess of enthusiasm into the original channel whose trend he was eagerly following.

"Tell me of her life those four years—the things she would not be likely to tell me," he urged, with vibrant interest that made the Captain want to tell him all he knew—with frills.

They drew their chairs closer together and lit their cigars.

X

"You doubtless know that my cousin and I were orphaned at the same time

by yellow fever during the scourge of '82, but you perhaps do not know that her guardian is not her uncle at all, but would have been her father if parents hadn't had more to say in things of that sort those days than now. My aunt's whilom lover appropriated the little girl, whose tangible assets at that time were not such as to make distant relatives—and that's the only sort that were left to us—scramble after the privilege of bringing her up. He put her in a convent school, St. Cecilia's, not because he was a Romanist, but because he was a bachelor and needed something more than a place to educate her. Being a shrewd lawyer, he examined all papers that, by good fortune, chanced to be in my uncle's safety vault and thus had escaped the holocaust the frightened populace made of our homes; and among them he found deeds to God-forsaken acres now ornamented with derricks that stand like sentinels over wealth incalculable. That's how Bonnor happens to be a multimillionairess while I am a soldier of fortune of another sort—not but what the dear girl has wept tears of rage and mortification at my refusing to share equally with her in that as in blood and name.

"The two years following the death of her friend, Cecil's mother, you know—er—your wife, of course," floundered the narrator, "she spent at her guardian's country place, Idlewood, near here, in worshiping the youngster she had appropriated pretty much as her guardian had appropriated her, and in studying under governesses and tutors, to repair the damage to an education interrupted by that escapade of yours. Such marvels of clothes and trappings as she did devise for that kid! A scion of royalty, nay, Solomon in all his glory, was ne'er arrayed as was that offspring of yours! If she had desired to prepare for herself a brilliant *début*, she could not have hit upon a more successful scheme for whetting public curiosity. She was the theme of gossip in drawing-room and club

from the moment the Governor-elect's domestic affairs became of public interest; and when she made her formal appearance at the Inaugural Ball last year as the young mistress of the Mansion, she created a perfect furor. What with youth, beauty, wealth and her romantic position of godmother to the son and heir of the bluest-blooded, handsomest—"

"Rot!"

"Don't interrupt."

"I beg pardon. Go on, please."

"The fellows all realized the pull it gave you—and 'pon honor, if that little chap had been mine, I'd have had him under lock and key the past year!—but some of them had more perseverance than foresight and were almost in at the finish. That *coup* of yours and Bonnor's stunned them into a quieter acceptance of the situation than indefinite preparation would have done—and, my dear Balfour, you'll never know the amount of worry and anxiety you have escaped."

"Did Bonnor—er—enjoy that sort of thing?"

"There isn't a woman living that doesn't like admiration!" laughed the Captain maliciously. It was just as well that this easy conquering young man should not rest in too great security. "But the poor girl's enormous wealth made her skeptical as to a lot of it, and rendered her more cruelly cold and unsympathetic than most of the cases deserved. As one poor devil expressed it: 'If a fellow had the nerve to aspire to possessing Bonnor Ramey herself, he wasn't likely to shy at so small a thing as being considered mercenary.' But a sort of icy purity that has always seemed to envelop Bonnor was her safeguard against promiscuous declarations. In one of her surfeited moods she told me that the only way she had retained her self-respect was through her ability to ward off proposals. My cousin is the sort of woman that all men reverence and other women are seldom jealous of. She has the mentality of a French woman and the nature of a saint . . . Our family physician, in accounting

for her presence on this mundane sphere, said that Kriss Kringle—she was a Christmas child, you know—fashioned her out of a block of ice in his workshop at the North Pole, and was afraid to endow her with emotions lest she melt before he could show his masterpiece to mortals." The Captain's voice trailed off into a pensiveness that betrayed his thoughts to have wandered from his whimsical narrative, and he lost himself in a reverie, of which Balfour was unmindful in his own preoccupation.

Certain phrases were still sounding recurrently in his ears: "The mentality of a French woman and the nature of a saint." The mentality of a French woman, yes; but with the pride, and a latent spark of the fire, of Lucifer. One glimpse had been given him of the Ice Maiden illuminated from within. O fool, fool, fool! to have sacrificed the moment to petty revenge!

The mentality of a French woman and the pride of Lucifer had combined to make her an irreproachable wife. So punctiliously were the *convenances* observed that the world suspected nothing amiss, while pride strengthened her with the assurance that she had pursued the only course she could rely on for securing to her the continued possession of the child.

Whatever of pique, regret or humiliation marred his intense love, not until the whimsically explained accident at the races had any element of personal or definite jealousy entered into his discomfiture. He was not always in the mood to accept Dr. Griswold's solution of it. Sometimes the thought persisted: What might Ira Irving have been saying to her under cover of the noise and excitement of the race? Had he ever had the right to protest against the sacrifice; and did he still hope to counteract the influence of the child? Was he pursuing her in a way she dared not—or cared not—appeal to her husband for protection against?

Maddened by such a possibility, he would put her to severest tests—to see if it were altogether for Cecil that she endured so unbetransgressively. Results

had been that sometimes hope blazed like a beacon light in a harbor of bliss yet to be attained—only to be lost a day, an hour, a moment later in fogs of doubt and jealousy and despair.

"If I ever despair altogether of winning your love, Bonnor," he had told her one day, soon after the accident, when something had retransformed him from the cheerful companion into the ardent lover, "I'll take Cecil and go away."

"Take Cecil!" she had whispered in terror, her eyes dilating with a cringing fear that made him feel like a brute or tyrant.

He had seized her in his arms, roughly, and crushed her to him with all the craving of his nature, and she had closed her eyes and lain quite still. He had begged, pleaded with her to open her eyes, that he might know what they concealed—dread, repulsion, whatever it might be—and besought her: "Do you loathe me, Bonnor?"

"No, no!" she had protested, but neither moved nor looked up.

"Do you tolerate me only because I have the power to separate you from Cecil?"

She had shaken her head slowly, while tears had gathered and hung from the long lashes, silent testimonials of confessed dependence upon him for the possession of the child she had reared and worshiped as her own.

"Darling, darling!" he had whispered, with his face close to hers, "pretend, only pretend to love me, and I'll never again frighten you about the boy."

Her form had yielded for a moment, as in her sanctum that unforgettable morning; a smile had softened her mouth, and her eyelids had uncovered gray-blue depths that had made his head swim. She had said, distinctly, ringingly, "Dick, I adore you!" and he had remained in a fool's paradise a full minute—then thrown her from him with the bitter denunciation: "You consummate actress!"

How was he ever to know? She could be warm or cold, calm or intense, whatever, whenever, wherever she

pleased, with a facility that confounded him and shattered his faith in her.

If his mood were tender, in these retrospections he would think: the pity of it—that, with her capabilities, she had had to give herself to one whose only hold upon her was parental power over the child to whom she was enslaved! Or if his heart was bitter, he would think of the Sabine women and the Cossack booty, and tell himself that the Adamic half had always been able to smile and caress, and soothe the brute whose helpless slave the fortune of war or circumstances or her own physical weakness had made her.

Such musings were developing in him fits of moody silence that caused Bonnor visible anxiety—which only strengthened his belief that she feared what he had it in his power to do, and felt the necessity of conciliating him.

During the prolonged silence between him and his guest, the smoke from their cigars furnished the only indication of the character of their respective thoughts. Captain Bonnor mouthed his smoke in volumes and blew it out in rhythmic rings indicative of mental peace, subdued or saddened, maybe, while Balfour sent short, irregular puffs from the corner of his mouth, alternating with long, fierce pulls that betrayed inward tumult.

"A most sociable pair!" laughed Bonnor, with a note of comradeship in her voice that reminded Dick of their strange honeymoon, and which he had not heard since, until evoked by this big, plain, genial cousin who gave promise of livening them up with a bit of unconventionality.

"I was telling your husband a few things about you—your uncanny origin and all that. On the square, Dick, when Bonnor was born the cold wave signal was hoisted, and it was the first white Christmas this region had known in the memory of the oldest inhabitant. Don't you remember throwing 'cold cotton balls' when you were but a lad of eight or so?"

"It is the most vivid memory of my youth, and even then I bowed down in worshipful gratitude before the un-

known Snow Queen whose image I fashioned with frozen hands and a glowing heart," Dick vowed with a prompt and cheerful mendacity that made Bonnor, in her turn, open her eyes.

Yes, undoubtedly Captain Bonnor was an acquisition to the family, and the husband and wife exchanged a first mutual, involuntary smile since the announcement of their marriage.

XI

"WHAT sort of social functions do you dislike least?" Mrs. Balfour asked her cousin at the breakfast table.

"The sort calling for the least exertion on my part," he replied, with contradictory energy.

"I fear you will not like the coming of Rhey Girard, then, for—"

"Heavens, cousin! There is something cyclonic in the mere announcement. 'The coming of Ragey Rard'! Is she a wild, woolly Westerner, and am I expected to be a Rough Rider gallant to her? Save me, Balfour!" he implored, with a semblance of terror that filled Cecil with uproarious delight and recalled "uggy Bonnie"—in contradistinction to "pretty Bonnie"—who had been a vague memory till this renewal of their acquaintance at breakfast.

"She is nothing of the sort," protested Mrs. Balfour. "A daintier bit of femininity you couldn't well imagine. But dissipation is the breath of her nostrils."

"It's another sort of breath in a man," grumbled the soldier aside to his host. "But if you want me to lead your lioness about, I'll roar for her and clank her chains all you wish," he added meekly.

"If my lioness, as you call her, wears any chains at all, they will be of purest gold."

"Is that flung out as a hint?"

"No—as a pearl before swine," pouted Bonnor in disgust. "Aren't you ever going to settle down, Ramey dear?" she asked plaintively.

"Let me alone in chesing of my wyf;
That charge upon my bak I wol endure."

He quoted so brusquely as to bring a look of pain into her eyes. "Forgive me, sweet cousin," he added with hasty penitence; "but do not, because you are happily married, fall into the mistake of trying to marry off all your friends."

Unaware of the irony of his words, the peculiar interchange of glances between his host and hostess led him to fear the source of his irritation was suspected, and he turned to Cecil in vexed confusion and proposed an immediate sprint over to the Governor's.

They two left alone, Dick rested his arms on the table and looked across at her in silence till she could no longer feign unconsciousness. She looked up, with the peculiar dilation of the eyes that seemed to take the place of a frown with her, and that Dick sometimes interpreted as meaning: What now? Am I not doing all anybody could expect of me?

"It's hard, isn't it, my dear—this living up to a standard set by other people?" She looked behind her, nervously, and Dick added with a bitter laugh: "Even the butler must be considered— Confound it, Bonnor! Come out under the trees with me. We'll be public enough for offensiveness, but I can at least talk naturally."

They left the breakfast room by way of the conservatory and presented the eminently domestic appearance of going on a morning round of inspection of their well kept premises.

"Dr. Griswold said he would be around this morning to lighten the dressing on your finger and relieve you of the sling. You will be glad, won't you?"

"Yes—and no. It has saved me a lot of tiresome—"

"Love making from your husband."

"Cecil has needed me a great deal of late," she defended quickly. "I should have had to devote much of my time to him even if it hadn't been for the accident. You know I have never neglected him for social affairs."

What she was really explaining, Dick

knew quite well, was her avoidance of himself ever since the races—the social neglect requiring no apology, so far as he was concerned.

"You wear yourself out needlessly, it seems to me."

"I love to do it. You don't know the happiness it is to watch his little sleeping face, listen for his heartbeats, close to his warm, soft body—"

"Why not let me watch with you sometimes, then, and share the happiness?"

"I'll try to be less selfish," she said, with a meekness that exasperated him.

"For heaven's sake, Bonnor, don't put me in the attitude of holding my child over you as a stick to keep you in subjection! I love the little chap, and am glad for him to have all the love and care you can lavish upon him, but I love you, too, and consider your welfare."

"Dick," slipping her arm through his and seeking his eyes, "promise me you will never take Cecil from me—not till he is a big boy, ready for college."

"With all my heart, my dear. I have no intention of interfering in his upbringing while he is in knickerbockers."

"You will not take him away from me, whatever I do?"

"No—not even if you let go now and then and tell his father how frightfully you hate him."

Her low laugh was so exultant that his heart contracted with fear, but he would not insult her with a proviso founded upon any such suspicion.

A servant came to announce Dr. Griswold's arrival.

Miss Girard arrived in time for luncheon. The men were waiting for them in the drawing-room, and for five minutes or more voices had been heard on the stairway.

"What a lot girls seem to find to talk about," muttered Captain Bonnor, with affected impatience.

"You don't seem so averse to meeting the little Girard," suggested his host.

"I want my luncheon," he growled, but disproving his mood with a broad, genial smile.

The ladies came in sight on the landing, whence the stairway broadened downward in a Colonial sweep. Again they paused, Miss Girard nestling beside her hostess in a pretty, worshipful way. She was a *petite*, babyish creature, with large, dark, changeable eyes and a dimpling mouth beyond whose pearly portals no harsh thing could be imagined to pass.

"You have others staying with you?"

"No one but a big soldierly cousin who will probably frighten such a mouse as you to death."

"Do you think so?" queried the mouse in a soft, musical voice that took one's attention from the inanity of the words themselves.

Mrs. Balfour thought: "Brains are superfluous with a voice like that." Aloud, she presented the men to her charming little guest.

"'Ramey Bonnor'—what a lovely name!" said Miss Girard, with delicious impersonality, her eyes sweeping the homely soldier in the same inoffensive way.

"It's nature's compensation," the Captain declared, bowing, and without smiling.

"Is that so?"

"Indeed it is!" he protested with sudden enthusiasm, feeling as though he were confirming a jingling little melody rather than a combination of words. "And the reverse is often true—Mother Nature's way of tempering vanity, perhaps. The prettiest fellow in my company, a regular beauty, is named Jenkins Scrubbs."

"Dreadful!" with a shudder. "I'm sure I should prefer a Satyr named Ramey Bonnor to a Hyperion called Jenkins Scrubbs," she mused, again with perfect impersonality.

Balfour caught his wife's smile, and to avoid laughing outright, broke in hastily, "I say, Miss Girard, will you do us a tremendous favor?"

"I should be delighted."

"After luncheon, then, just take this lazy big fellow out and teach him tennis."

"Would you like to learn?"

"With such a teacher I should be

charmed!" Captain Bonnor declared with marked ambiguity.

When she came down in short skirt and open neck sailor blouse, with a cap pinned flat against a mass of curls, she looked a fitter companion for Cecil.

The Captain gathered up racquets and balls, and made as if he would include his small opponent if she had no objection to being borne to the court in that way.

Dick and Bonnor watched them a while from the side veranda, Bonnor quoting musingly:

"They played at tennis that summer day—
Where was it? Oh, call it Mount Desert.
The place matters not; I will simply say
They were playing tennis that summer day,
And she wore a short and striped skirt."

"He played but ill—'twas his first essay—
And she his partner and coach was both:
Though perhaps not 'up' in the points of
play,
Yet she knew the game in a general way
And to give him points seemed nothing
loath."

"What a continuous surprise you are, Bonnor! I would give a good deal to be able to call forth dreamy sentiment like that."

"I would that you could!" she sighed—then exclaimed bitterly, to his great amazement until he recalled his promise of the morning: "You stir up something different altogether—the very dregs of my nature, it seems to me sometimes, that make me hate myself as well as you."

"Do you regret your mistake, dear?"

"My mistake?" she repeated, with a look Balfour had heard described as "the Arctic blue of her cold stare." "I know of no mistake I made; there was no other way. Don't you know," vehemently, "that I thought it over and over and over all those years?"

"Yes, my dear girl, and made the most hopeless mistake possible—that of creating an ideal founded on a child's sweetness and purity and pliability and expecting any mortal man to measure up to it!" he retorted more calmly than she, and willfully misunderstanding the meaning of her words. "I have been at a disadvantage from the start. You knew all there

was to know about me, while you persisted in making a mystery of yourself. If I could have had an earlier glimpse into your innermost soul—"

"Purely a *mise en scène*, Dick," she smiled, with perfectly regained self-control. "You deceive yourself if you imagine me other than I am. I and the girl you dutifully and chivalrously married in the mountains are the same—with a different perspective, merely. You were unfortunate in your first point of view. It is the old familiar trick of self-deception. Others have tried it—imagining the potency to be in Bonnor Ramey's personality and not her appurtenances. Why make such an ado about it? You have realized your ambition and I have Cecil. *Que voulez-vous?*"

He had never before been able to hold himself so well in hand—due, he told himself, to her no longer fearing him, and therefore relieving him of questioning her sincerity—and he took her hand from the veranda railing and held it in both of his as he said, with smiling reproach: "Your cold philosophy, my darling, provides for every feature of the case but my useless love."

"Try utilizing it in preventing public utterances that have a disagreeable tendency to ricochet back upon my unwilling ears." She withdrew her hand from his limp grasp and went down into the yard toward the tennis players, leaving him stunned.

His words in the billiard room—the last unguarded utterance of which he had been guilty during the few distracting weeks of his marriage—had, without doubt, been repeated to her. But how, and by whom? It was not a thing he could investigate, nor an offense for which he could apologize—not even a passion-provoked untruth he could seek forgiveness for and be understood. He wondered if this were her declaration of war and the end of all pretense. It would not alter their relation in public, he was sure, so far as she was concerned, and he swore he'd play his

part in the farce as convincingly as she; but what when they were alone? Did this put an end to all the dangerously sweet experimenting which doubt had justified? Would she suffer it—now that she had his promise about Cecil and had let him know that she knew of his last unpardonable insult? If he could only be sure that it was Irving who had told her—told her under cover of the noise and excitement of the race and caused the "rage and chagrin" that had broken her finger! He would know how to settle with a man; dueling was not a lost art in the South.

A hot pride surged up in him and forced him to the initiative. He would not hang on Bonnor's coldness.

He went to their apartments, summoned two men servants and changed things to suit the new requirements. The spacious nuptial chamber was quickly transformed into a living room, with books, plants, easy chairs and cushioned couches. The twin beds of dull brass and dainty draperies were placed in the widely separated dressing rooms, and new and smaller dressing rooms made of the alcoves off the bathrooms.

When he was alone and stood surveying the pleasing outward evidence of a wrecked relationship that had been precious in spite of heartaches, he became conscious of Bonnor's silent, wondering presence.

He faced her quietly and said with no effort to conceal his bitterness: "The end of your martyrdom, my dear."

XII

RHEY GIRARD's simplicity of manner was of the order of clear water above a pebbly beach; and Captain Bonnor, if not exactly beyond his depth, had been taken off his feet more than once by its deceptive look of shallowness.

Whether or not she were conscious of his mental scrutiny was as uncertain as her present consciousness of his quiet contemplation, from the door-

way, of her and Cecil on the floor of the music room. Cecil was sitting Turkish fashion on a small rug, with his back to the door, and Miss Girard crouched, or huddled, with her head in his lap—a dainty heap of muslin, lace and ribbons.

"I sink he's nice, awful nice, dess splendid, don't you?" he was saying insistently, trying to peer into the eyes that had been playing peek-a-boo with him from amidst ruthlessly disarranged curls. One might suppose Rhey Girard's hair to be a mass of ringlets till a treacherous pin betrayed here and there a long wavy wisp.

"Don't you sink so?" persisted Cecil; and Captain Bonnor shamelessly bided the answer.

"Cecil, dear child, did you ever hear of Sambo's country cousin who came to town to see the sights? He was a polite darkey and said something nice about everything he saw. But when Sambo took him to the Zoo and showed him a hippopotamus, the very least unpretty thing he could think of to say was, 'My, ain't he plain!'"

Captain Bonnor roared, and Cecil clutched his companion in a spasmodic vise from which there was no escaping. But Miss Girard's composure amidst discomposure indicated malice aforethought.

She disentangled herself and got up without any hurry or flurry and stood before the self-confessed eavesdropper, smiling, unrepentant, perfectly at ease, without so much as a motion at putting herself to rights. Her curly head was tousled, the ribbon about her slender throat twisted till the bow nestled under an ear, and the soft, full waist of her morning frock pulled up over the confining band of jeweled silver in an irregular blouse; yet she did not look disheveled or untidy—merely childishly careless. Captain Bonnor envied the sun god who could steal in each morning ahead of her maid and kiss her in this unkempt condition.

"Is there room in this—er—cage of monkeys for the hippopotamus?" he

inquired gravely, venturing all the way in. "Sensitiveness, you see, Miss Girard, is not my weak point."

She looked at him in wide eyed surprise. "Why should it be? A homeliness like yours is a distinction."

"Like that of a hippopotamus?"

"Or a lion."

"You are one too many for me, my little lady. I'm not sure yet whether I have been complimented. How queerly such Delphic utterances sound from your childish lips!"

"Do you think them childish?" queried she, lifting her eyes—her lips, the Captain would have sworn—to his with a look that would have gotten her into trouble but for the chaperonage of Master Cecil. After a dizzy moment, however, Captain Bonnor was sensible enough to realize that had Cecil not been there, neither would the look.

He wore an invisible armor against genuine heart wounds, but Rhey Girard was the sort to make flirtations pardonable and very interesting. But if he was lacking in sensitiveness, so also was he in vanity, and it never crossed his mind that there was any danger in him.

"Music hath charms to soothe the savage breast," he quoted with apparent irrelevance, and offered to race her to the piano.

"Who is to be the soother?"

"You, of course—and I the soothee. You haven't the faintest notion, Miss Girard, how much I am in need of it. I'll have serious heart trouble if my cousin doesn't look after me better."

She dropped on to the seat with a little gurgling, incredulous laugh, and ran a preliminary scale with voice and hand. "Trying my limitations," she explained, to break his silent, devouring gaze.

"Have you any?"

"I do not proclaim them," she shrugged, turning her back on him.

She was certainly right so far as her voice was concerned; for, while it was small—small like everything else about her save her heart and her eyes—it was used with discretion and

never taxed to its limit, never hurled forth with explosive force that gives the impression of nothing left behind except the organ itself. The result was artistically satisfactory.

Mrs. Balfour came in quietly, so as not to disturb the singing, and Balfour strolled in from the piazza where he had been taking the morning air—one of the most delightful before breakfast features of Southern life. He had a fresh, half-blown rose in his hand, and he crossed over to his wife and fastened it in the low, loose coil of her hair so that the delicate pink gave her the touch of color her pallor needed—breaking for the first time in days the aloofness that had existed between them since they had watched together from the veranda Captain Bonnor's first lesson in tennis.

The ancestral portraits had seldom looked down upon two prettier groupings than were made by Dick and his wife, in the one part of the room, and Rhey Girard and the big, soldierly man at the piano.

Miss Girard half turned to rise, but Captain Bonnor pleaded for one more, only one more song. "The soothing process," he whispered, "is almost complete."

She hesitated an instant, then turned to the piano again and sang, with all the earnestness of her soul and coquetry of her big, wicked eyes:

"Because I Love You!"

Bonnor was saying, as the words rang out so clear and impassioned: "Our audience is too preoccupied to be suitably impressed; why trouble yourself?"

"Rhey answers for me," he said simply. His altered manner affected no pretense of not loving her still; merely a proud restraint in himself and no demands upon her.

"If you call that soothing," the Captain said, for Miss Girard's ear only, "I shouldn't like to be the fellow you practiced the other sort on."

"If the effect hasn't been all that could be desired, we might try—"

"What?"

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"Breakfast!" she finished with innocent resourcefulness, as the butler opportunely appeared.

Miss Girard's quick intuitions divined something out of tune in the Balfour harmonics, and she centered attention upon herself with a sigh and a puzzled, pensive expression in her childish face.

"A penny for your thoughts!" Captain Bonnor said, stumbling an easy prey into the trap set for him.

"I was envying Mrs. Balfour's repose. Her motion is poetry, music. Such poise! Such graceful unhurriedness—a very *adagio* symphony! I wonder how my movements could be described?"

"As the 'locomotion of a kitten that approaches one in a series of coquettish curves,'" he teased.

She crouched and glared from half-shut eyes. "I could scratch you!" she hissed—then straightened up with the effect of a spring and laughed merrily.

Cold chills chased up and down the soldier's spine, and he wondered if he mightn't be smoking over a powder magazine.

XIII

"I WASN'T aware before that Ira Irving was given to midday soft drinks. Or was it the company he found himself in?"

Bonnor turned from the window with a visible start, and dropped one hand, tightly closed, at her side. She had not heard her husband enter, and, disproportionately startled, observed inappositely: "You missed the train? Our guests will regret their selfish desertion of me when they find they might have had our evening at bridge after all."

He came close to her and, bending to catch her eyes, said sharply: "Do you think I care a—er—farthing what our guests think of my unexpected return?"

"That I am pleased goes without saying."

"I wish your words were as sincere

as conventional. What have you got in your hand—something alive?" he asked lightly, taking her closed hand in his and turning the now clenched palm upward.

"A reminder of what might have been!" she said bitterly, with an effort to release herself.

"Show it to me, Bonnor!" he begged softly, hoping, he knew not what, from some vaguely possible discovery, and gently resisting her effort to escape.

"No—no," she pleaded, her face a dead white, and the pulse of her two wrists beating against his hands like imprisoned birds.

"You will not?" he cried in sudden, savage jealousy, uncontrollable as unforeseen.

"I will not!" she said haughtily.

"As your husband, I demand it."

"As your wife and not your slave, I refuse."

"I could force your hand open."

She glanced down at the finger, white and pinched from recent bandaging, and said quietly, "A feat hardly worthy the strength of a man."

His grasp relaxed instantly and, availing herself of the movement, she placed her hand behind her.

His hand, not entirely removed, mechanically followed and closed, tenderly this time, over hers again; and with his arm half encircling her they stood looking at each other.

Marrying the girl he had thought her to be and finding her the woman she was, had been to Dick Balfour like carelessly drinking a glass of water and discovering it to be champagne. She went to his head and caused him to do things unwise and regrettable, but the action was usually as unpremeditated as the result was inevitable. The cause of dispute had already slipped from his mind, and he was conscious of nothing save her nearness and that they were alone—something that did not happen often of late. He raised his other arm to draw her to him, when with an angry exclamation she wrenched herself from him and flung the contents of her hand out the window.

She escaped to her room as hurriedly as an ever present regard for appearances permitted.

It never occurred to him that he had been misunderstood; he had forgotten his momentary jealousy. Surprised at her vehemence and furious with himself, he remained leaning against the open casement of the French window, thinking enviously of the recent opportunities of San Juan Hill and Manila Bay of making life worth while or else putting a quietus on a man who needed heroizing to win the heart of a woman surfeited with lovers. His attention was arrested by something in bold relief against the green grass below. He stepped out from the balcony, looked more closely, and leaped the balustrade.

The faded, crushed rose was soon in his hand, suggesting possibilities that took his breath away. It was *the* rose, the fragrant thing he had fastened in her hair only that morning while she had tortured him with her cynicism. What had she been doing with the rose, or *to* it, when his unexpected appearance had made her shut her hand tight over it? Was coquetry innate to every woman, or were her coldness and indifference feigned to appease the pride he had so ruthlessly wounded? Secure in the knowledge of his complete, if tardy, surrender of his heart, was she punishing before forgiving?

The thought made him dizzy, and he dropped down on the moonlit lawn in sheer inability to stand. He lay back on the grass and gazed into the sky—"blue vault of heaven" his mood characterized it—and blew kisses, in imagination, at the fair moon, climbing rapidly over the distant hill, warmed by the passionate rays of the reluctant westering sun. "Poor old chap!" he would have liked to maudle in idiotic apostrophe. "Turn on her some of these fine evenings, if it stops the universe!"

Realizing somewhat the absurd length to which his thoughts were leading him, he pulled himself together and resumed a more dignified attitude mentally and physically.

He picked up a crumpled piece of paper at his feet and smoothed it across his knees. He was stringing out precious moments of anticipation, almost fearful of the happiness within his grasp, and his thoughts eagerly followed his wife in her conjectured movements since their stormy parting. Mechanically he read the scribbled lines:

MY DEAR BONNOR:

Meet me at Guilliano's at twelve o'clock and we will arrange details. You seem a bit reckless, but better that than nervousness. I trust there is no intention of kidnapping; the situation would be hopelessly embarrassing for me.

I still think it would be safer for you to let me accompany you.

Yours faithfully,

I. I.

He read it through again and again before any association of ideas illuminated its meaning. But the light came, when it did finally come, with a blinding flash.

Irving had been the one person skeptical of their romantic devotion; the one man whose attitude toward Bonnor Balfour had remained the same it had been to Bonnor Ramey; the one person who recognized the tie that bound them and cherished the hope of breaking it; the one fascinating, unscrupulous, self-mastering lover who had bided his time to o'erleap the altar itself in pursuit of his prey. That Bonnor should have been conquered by a wooing so subtle, so restrained, so unforeshadowing, he did not wonder. Her nature was unarmed against such methods, her mind unsuspecting of so insidious an attack.

He looked at the rose, then at the note, and a sob of protest arose in his heart: "My God, my God! To have been so near to heaven, and without a moment's warning to be dashed to hell!"

He lay prone on the grass, with his face buried in his arms, unconscious of the flight of time, dazed, self-reproachful, wondering.

All at once anger seized and shook him. He sprang to his feet and went in search of her who would wreck his home, disgrace his name, even drag his

child into her shameful escape from the husband she had forced herself upon. He passed through the large room recently converted into a living room, and opened her bedroom door without knocking. He found her lying on the couch, face downward on arms flung above her head in utter abandonment. An inarticulate sound brought her to her feet in resentment at the intrusion; but when she confronted him the color receded from her flushed, swollen face as she felt the storm about to break.

She had never before encountered a look so like what one might expect on the face of a god of vengeance. In a less comely one than Dick's it would have been repulsive; in his it was fascinating. She went up to him and asked wonderingly, "What is it, Dick?"

"Read that."

She read it and drew away in comprehending scorn.

"Well?"

"You were there; I saw you!"

"Yes, but—"

He leaned toward her with face like marble and eyes ablaze. "I can kill him; but you—you!"

"I am sure you will regret so much misspent emotion when I explain that I merely chanced upon Mr. Irving and *Captain* Bonnor arranging for an automobile—"

"Darling, forgive me!"

But she had flown to her dressing room and locked the door after her.

XIV

THE absence of her guests afforded Bonnor the opportunity to remain in her room and indulge a nervous headache; and Dick took a later train for his delayed trip and was gone longer than he had planned. It was at dinner several days later, therefore, before all met again.

Miss Girard took in the table with a quick sweep of her dark eyes and suddenly began to talk.

"I presume every town has its walking directory. I met yours yesterday.

He was my *vis-à-vis* at dinner, and reminded me of Sir Joseph or Jacob Somebody who, they say,

"stood to welcome a crowd,
And rubbed his hands and smiled aloud,
And bow'd, and bow'd, and bow'd, and bow'd,
Like a man who is sawing marble.

"Perhaps it's his deafness that keeps him in that attitude of reaching out for things—morsels to be rolled under the tongue, as well as the kind to be swallowed. The poor waiter was distracted—handed things on the right side and the wrong side, but never caught the old gossip's wandering attention. I wanted to whisper to the butler to have the courses let down before him through the ceiling. He was so afraid of missing his comment on everything and everybody that he caught at mere sounds. Mr. Dalray spoke of a Mr. Richards's incubating mania. He said, I believe, 'Richards's latest whim is a hennery.' 'Henry? Henry?' fluttered my Blue Book; 'what are they going to name it Henry for? There never was a Henry in the Balfour family nor the Ramey either that I ever heard of.' Somebody spoke up quickly: 'Oh, they haven't had time—to give the subject due consideration!' and everybody shrieked."

She covered, with a leisurely little hand, an innocent yawn as again everybody shrieked—that is, the Captain did, loud enough for all three, and Dick was laughing quietly in Bonnor's flushed face. Before a word could be spoken, she turned her back on the noisy soldier and, looking penitently first at Mr. and Mrs. Balfour, began in a way that made her fellow guest know that she now had it in for him: "I've a confession to make. Captain Bonnor and I had such a funny experience last evening. I was wild to ride in an automobile and have been begging him for days to take me. He said he could 'manage bucking ponies, but didn't know a blamed thing—I made him promise, though, and last night he brought Mr. Irving's machine around. Oh, his man was along, of course—Mr. Irving's chauffeur," she explained eagerly to the look in her host's face. Bon-

nor read better the compressed lips and pained eyes, but was glad to have it interpreted as alarmed disapproval.

"We flew on and on like birds—or fugitives for Gretna Green with an irate sire in hot pursuit—and if Captain Bonnor was enjoying it half as much as I was, I don't wonder he forgot how far we were going. The man behind leaned forward and hinted, 'Can't get gasoline out this way, sir.' Captain Bonnor didn't seem to like the interference, but he turned around, anyway, to come home. We got turned all right, but for some reason the engine whirled and whizzed without moving a wheel, and there we sat wondering. Nobody, of course, but a military commander would expect to learn it all in a few lessons, and he just sat and glowered. The sure-enough chauffeur leaned forward again and said politely, 'Throw out your clutch, sir,' and—"

Captain Bonnor hadn't seen anything funny in the situation at the time, nor known that she had, and now he began to grow so red that both Dick and Bonnor urged: "Go on—what did he say?"

"He said, 'Say, smart Alec, if you were as good at butting out as you are at butting in, we wouldn't need any machinery to run this dummy carriage!'"

The laugh was on him, but he joined in with the others, till hysteria almost possessed them.

Bonnor and Dick felt how absurdly incongruous it would be, after such uproarious mirth together, to resume toward each other the tragic attitude with which they had met.

When Mrs. Balfour and Miss Girard had left them the men sat for a time, smoking in silence. Dick's heart felt very warm toward their little guest. She had tided them over shoals of whose existence even she could not be aware; and it puzzled him to know how she had known it to be a moment for rapid nonsense.

Captain Bonnor was wrestling with an uncanny feeling he couldn't explain, not having the data of the Balfours' inner consciousness. Drawing a deep

breath, he mused, aloud: "Is she deep—or only incredibly shallow?"

"I'd advise you not to tumble overboard while trying to fathom her," laughed his host.

XV

THE Governor had to give politic as well as political dinner parties now and then, and often the material was heavy and ill assorted. He usually lightened it with some of his young friends.

Bonnor and Dick, Miss Girard and Captain Bonnor, and Mr. Irving and the Lieutenant-Governor's daughter, to whom he was trying, for reasons of his own to marry Irving, were the leaven for the one in progress.

It was to prove one of the most trying occasions of the Balfours' brief married life; and there were others present who would remember it.

Dick and Bonnor had to listen to their romantic engagement and marriage harped upon in all the keys to which the instruments of torture were attuned; and to Dick's sometimes appealing, sometimes protective looks Bonnor would return sympathetic or reassuring smiles—the husband and wife united for the time being in fighting a common enemy.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Colonel Biglow, intercepting one of these glances, "pretty close on to two months married, and still casting sheep's eyes at each other! Yet, of all the reasons assigned for the marriage of Bonnor Ramey and Richard Balfour being a foregone conclusion, I don't recall a single one in which Cupid figured prominently."

"Master Cecil was such a material Cupid we perhaps lost sight of his Greek prototype," suggested his wife.

"I am inclined to think," interposed the Governor, with the evident intention of dismissing the subject of his ward's marriage, "that we preserved all the mystery and surprise for ourselves by failing to take into account Uncle Sam's postal facilities. A *pro-*

pos of correspondence, Miss Winthrop, what charming letters your little Japanese *protégée* writes!"

"Yes, yes, my missionary experiment was eminently satisfactory," responded Miss Winthrop, a fragile body saved from invalidism by sheer force of will.

"And altogether she didn't cost you as much as a good sized dinner party, did she?" quickly calculated one of the guests in the only terms familiar to him.

"Speaking of money, isn't it sad about the Seymours losing everything in that tobacco deal?"

"Yes, and did you hear how that parvenu, Miss Smythe, treated Angie, because her mother has had to take boarders?"

"I don't see what she's got to kick at—ought to be as respectable to board people as horses, eh, Bonnor?"

The Judge had directed his witticisms at the expense of the Smythe livery pedigree toward Captain Bonnor, who was known to be a lover of horse-flesh, but before any answer was possible Mrs. Latham broke in with a gasp: "My, how conflicting you and your cousin must find your names, Mrs. Balfour! It positively startled me just now when the Judge used your mutual name in such a familiar tone."

"The tone is what usually differentiates them," Captain Bonnor answered quickly.

"But how would it be about mixed up correspondence, for instance, where tone shading is inoperative?" suggested Irving carelessly, and the Balfours exchanged quick glances of intelligence—Dick's look growing so black that Bonnor held it for an instant with a steady warning smile.

"Mrs. Balfour's Junoesque and my Saturnine beauty inspire such different sorts of effusions as to leave no doubt on that score," the ugly officer grimaced.

"That mobile countenance of yours, Captain—automobile, so to speak—would be your fortune on the stage. I envy you!" shrugged Ira Irving, distorting his own effeminately handsome features into an ineffectual semblance of those which Ramey Bonnor's friends

never thought of deprecating and his enemies vainly tried to caricature.

There was an embarrassing silence, broken by a soft, clear voice behind whose simplicity it was impossible to suspect lurking malice.

"He that irreverent mocks
The rich notes of the swan may produce a
few squawks
And betray his true species,"

quoted Rhey Girard, and narrated an absurd incident in the rendering of the Swan Song in "Lohengrin" by a certain noted tenor.

The Balfours escaped immediately after dinner to their own home, and when they found themselves alone Bonnor sank into a chair with a sigh.

"At last!"

Dick looked at her, and caught his breath sibilantly. She was always effective in an evening gown, but to-night there was something in the Indian summer atmosphere that made her bare arms and neck and the long, graceful lines of her relaxed figure against the pale damask of the upholstered chair painfully alluring—especially to one who was holding his natural self in leash and groping for some spiritualized expression of passion that would appeal to a temperament repelled by the too physical in others and frightened at it in herself. The shock of his ill founded jealousy and the purity that failed to grasp the enormity of his offense went far toward unraveling for Dick the mystery of his wife. But in the understanding he found no surer hope of winning her. Name, position, wealth were theirs by inheritance, and the age offered little opportunity for deeds, in place of words, of love. Cecil had unlocked the door of her heart to him, but Eros had tried to break in.

He came and stood behind her chair, resting his arms on the soft, high back, and talking sometimes down at her and again to her reflection in the pier glass opposite.

"They were a beastly lot!" he agreed, to her sigh of release and relief. "Yet, I believe there are others besides myself who will reckon this

evening among the bright memories of their lives. Disconcerting as was the pitiless irony of 'good intentions,' I was happy in the companionship in misery it afforded me. And I dare swear Captain Bonnor would not have changed looks with Apollo."

"Wasn't Rhey's the most unique and artistic bit of punishment you ever saw administered? She is uncanny in her appositeness, and seems to speak with a child's truthfulness and disregard of consequences."

Dick felt the old "aloofness" creeping up between them, and he determined to say something that was on his mind before letting their talk drift away from themselves.

"I have discovered in Irving a more dangerous enemy than I suspected—though, thank God, not the kind I feared. To what extent I am indebted to him will perhaps take time to find out; but as to that note—with its accursed ambiguity—I am sure it was designed to fall into my hands. How it came into yours instead matters not. I can understand your perplexity and embarrassment, and, considering what happened, can't reproach you for distrusting me—though I can't help believing that had you frankly showed it to me the sleeping demon would not have awakened at all. I had just come out of such a fool's paradise over a rose I had found and recognized and unreasonably believed might have been what you had in your hand that the note made a brute of me."

A smile that revealed pleasure in the explanation quickened his pulses, but he had spoiled too many situations by impetuosity to lose self-command now. He remained as he was, not even touching the hair blown now and then against his hands by the breeze from the open window, and continued his dispassionate remarks to her mirrored self.

"I am not going to ask your forgiveness again, dear, until I have in some way or other earned it—though God only knows how that can ever happen! But if among all my offenses,

actual or accredited, there is no utterly unforgivable one, kiss me now in token of a possible future redemption, and I will not ask for another till your heart can go with it."

"A long and fond farewell?" she mocked, at his reflection in the mirror, not raising her eyes to the face so little above her that she could feel his breath on her hair.

"If it seems so to you—yes."

He awaited her decision, motionless and in silence.

She hesitated only an instant, then raised her long cool arms, linked her fingers lightly and bent his face to hers. With supreme effort he left all action to her, and his lips received the first voluntary pressure of their wedded life.

He could not have detained her even had he forgotten his promise and tried. All strength had gone out of him in the pressure of her lips—lips that had so often received but never before given back—and he leaned for breathless moments against the chair with his eyes closed.

There are those who are born when the sign of prophecy is in an unpropitious part of their birth star, and in every ambiguous situation of life are fated to be misconstrued. To such unfortunates, circumstantial evidence is fatal. Not so with the Balfours. Fate combined with public opinion to misjudge favorably.

Captain Bonnor and Miss Girard were accidental witnesses from the moonlight outside of the ideal scene in the drawing-room. The big soldier sighed, embarrassed at the unintentional sound, and recited in hurried explanation:

"It is hard to feel lonesome for love that is kind
To the uttermost, tender and truthful, and blind
To your ugliness, quick to discover your need,
And a spendthrift in giving itself."

"You have small cause for feeling 'lonesome' for love like that!" murmured Rhey Girard—then bit her lips till the blood started.

"Do you mean—" whispered he, bending to look into her face.

"I meant nothing!" she cried, wrenching her hand from the arm that had crushed it close to his side, her face fierce and hot even in the moonlight.

"But, Rhey, if—"

She was gone—and he thought it perhaps just as well, for time and place were not conducive to acting with a clear head.

XVI

THE numerous and begrimed progeny of the tollgate keeper stamped like young cattle as the horizontal bar, on which they were practicing their untutored athletics, swung high in the air at the dashing, heralded approach of a vehicle which seemed to their distended eyes the advance chariot of a circus.

It was merely a coaching party from the city bound for a day of freedom and fun. Their destination was a crescent range of hills where the wild grape, black haw and the frost-touched persimmon flourished, and fallen leaves rustled one back to childhood or made Actæons surprising Dianas in the secret pools fed by mountain streams. At a point overlooking, many feet below, a lakelet whose placid waters were seldom disturbed except by the portable canoe of some unsociable Nimrod, the four spent horses were checked for breath, while the gay crowd wasted much of theirs.

"Ugh! What a forlorn hole in the ground!" "A dimple in the face of Nature!" were simultaneous apostrophes, and each was right according to the inner vision. Life is made up of simple facts characterized by individuals themselves, and too often we are careless of the key to our natures supplied by unguarded utterances.

This particular day would have furnished abundant material to a student of character—for freedom too often means a lapse from good breeding as well as from convention, and wounded feelings, if no greater injuries, are mementos of the occasion.

Miss Girard, in whose honor the out-

ing was planned, had cause to remember the day.

She came upon a group in time to hear one of them ask, "Where was she the latter part of the evening at the Phi Delta dance?" and someone whispered "Sh!"

"Spirited away by some lucky collegian, no doubt. . . . Who was he, Miss Girard? The last I saw of you, you were making a very pretty picture, with a huge palm for a background—"

"Whose, the ugly officer's?" an envious one giggled.

She turned away and continued her solitary ramble. Not a quiver betrayed the sudden rage in her heart; not a trace of excitement marked her calm retreat; but when she was at a safe distance her childlike face underwent a startling change. The blood surged into it, dyeing it a painful crimson, then receded leaving it deadly pale. Again it would rush up, and again recede; and thus ebbing and flowing, ebbing and flowing, while her breath came in little gasps and her aimless step grew faster, her lids quivering over flashing eyes and her lips pressing hard over clenched teeth, she wandered far away from those who had so cruelly humiliated her.

After a struggle such as never before in her young life had she been called upon to go through, and in which she was not even yet victor, she found herself taken vise-like between the large palms punned upon and held at arm's length, while Captain Bonnor scanned her emotion-racked face and demanded, "What in the name of all the furies is the matter with you?"

She made a desperate effort at self-control, long enough to declare fiercely, "I would give a hundred dollars for an excuse to cry!"

He whistled softly, and a large dog bounded toward them. She uttered a terrified shriek and sprang to the shelter of the arms opened to receive her. She burst into a very tempest of nervous, frightened tears. After a full minute of luxurious and undisturbed sobbing she withdrew herself and began a blushing apology, but

was stricken dumb by her protector's extended hand and exultant comment: "Never earned a hundred so easily and pleasantly in all my life!"

"Did you—was the dog—wasn't he really going to eat me up?" she laughed and stammered hysterically.

"His inclination to do so wasn't half so strong as mine, I assure you," he declared, adjusting the disarranged cap over her curls with the skill of a maid and the tenderness of a lover, and being equally neither.

"It's 'most lunch time," he suggested, looking at his watch, then ruefully at her tear-stained face. "We must find some water to bathe these telltale eyes."

"It won't be necessary now," she shrugged indifferently. "I have a dearly bought excuse."

"You were more than welcome to take longer if you didn't get your money's worth."

"Oh, yes, I got my money's worth!" she said vindictively. "If I hadn't cried, I should have—have—burst!"

His loud laugh was cut short by shriek after shriek from the direction of the lake, and they broke into a run. They had not gone far when they met Cecil's nurse, who, at sight of them, screamed, "They's all drownin' together!" and fell to the ground in violent hysterics.

They did not stop to learn anything of her, but sped on to the lake—Captain Bonnor covering space like Seven League Boots, his little companion and her woes forgotten.

Bonnor had gone in search of Cecil and his nurse, and found Tishy looking for her. Each had thought the child with the other, and both were frightened a moment later at seeing him rush headlong down the hill with a playful mongrel dog in his wake. They called to him reassuringly, but he heard or heeded them not and kept on in his terrified and dangerous flight, his short legs twisting in and out over the uneven surface, threatening every moment to bring him to grief.

On, on he flew, till the chase

merged from amusement into anxiety, from anxiety into fear, and from fear into terror. The waters of the lake hugged the very base of the hill at this point, and if not arrested in his mad flight he might plunge—

The thought lent the wings of the wind to Bonnor's feet; and as the child disappeared over a slight promontory and a splash marked the end of his flight, she set her teeth hard and plunged after, with no thought of the depth of the water or her inability to swim.

Dick reached the water's edge in time to see wife and child sinking together.

"Save him or I'll never—" she gasped, flinging the little body toward him with a last desperate effort as the water closed over her.

Unless one has at some time approached very near the portals of Death through this medium, or stood helplessly by and watched a loved one pass through, it is impossible to realize the amount of thinking that can be concentrated in the interval between the sinking and rising of a drowning person. Whether or not the thought came to Dick that this was the longed-for opportunity, certainly there was the despairing recognition of its futility.

To save the child was easy enough; to save both wife and child next to impossible unless help arrived, for the water was deep and ice cold and the bodies were far apart. But of what avail to save one without the other? The child's life would make him curse the price of it, and without Cecil his wife was more than lost to him. "Dear God, if one—all!" was the prayer in his heart as, with a few swift strokes, he reached and encircled the small form thrown toward him and swam, single-armed, to where the water was hiding that which was dearer than life.

There was no current, and she had spent her strength and consciousness upon the child. He seized her as she came to the surface, and, for the space of a few quick breaths, buoyed

his double burden above water, then flung the long, loosened coils of Bonnor's hair across Cecil's body, thence over his own shoulder, to be seized with an undergrip by the hand they were to assist in anchoring to his body his unconscious burdens, while he should pull with an already weary arm toward shore.

"If I succeed—if I succeed!" was the one throb of gladness in the all but hopeless uncertainty.

His breathing grew unaccountably quick and labored, and he felt that he was choking. Turning his neck this way and that to counteract the stricture, he realized what it was tightening about his throat and smiled to know that Death must take all three if any.

XVII

"KINDLY remain with him till I can get back—an hour, at most. His man will be outside, in case of an emergency, but his ravings are not for the ears of a servant. If consciousness returns during my absence, use your best judgment in dealing with him—but avoid excitement. Humor him; humor him, sir. Purely mental shock, I am thinking, but extraordinary—most extraordinary!"

Dr. Griswold left the room quietly, and Captain Bonnor went over to the window to see how much daylight remained. Four hours had seemed as many days.

Attracted by a sound, he looked around to see Balfour sitting on the edge of the bed with a pistol at his temple. The quick spring was so self-explanatory that the weapon was lowered to cover him while Dick commanded: "Stay where you are and answer my question." Captain Bonnor obeyed coolly, satisfied for the moment in getting the aim of the weapon changed. "No evasion, please. I'm in no mood for any of Griswold's damned 'humoring.'" He drew a deep breath, then asked: "Is Cecil living or dead?"

"Living, to be sure—thunderation!" as Dick fell back in a dead faint.

He applied restoratives without calling assistance, and when his patient came around all right he pitched into him vigorously, forgetful of instructions.

"Confound your hot head! What the dickens do you mean by all this melodrama? You'll ruin my reputation as a nurse."

"You would not be talking that way if she weren't li— Is she? Yes, she *must* be living if I am!"

"Naturally, considering the way you were tied together. Jove, but you had a cool head on you then if never before! That scheme of yours was a corker—saved Cecil's life beyond a doubt—hoisted him clean out of the water on top of you both; but it came deuced near fixing you. Bonnor fared pretty well, too, but she's now suffering from a fell determination to shave her head smooth as a billiard ball—which I think I'll advise her to do as soon as things quiet down a bit, and suggest her buying a wig of fluffy little ringlets that a fellow can get tangled up in without endangering his life."

Dick smiled wanly, with the easy vacillation of a relaxed mind, then groaned in such conscious despair that his companion was startled. This was not delirium.

"None of that, old fellow; the doctor won't like it. You've had a close call, both in the water and out of it," remonstrated Captain Bonnor gravely.

"I only wish it had ended the whole blooming farce!"

The Captain regarded him in silence a moment, then muttered: "Humph, that explains things!"

"What explains what?" Dick demanded crossly, confirming his nurse's quick decision that a little healthful curiosity wouldn't be bad for a man planning such speedy severance of earthly connections.

"Your queer behavior for the past few hours. My cousin and the boy came around promptly and were soon

clothed in their right minds, as well as dry duds, though they must have swallowed considerable water; while you didn't go down at all, but just went out of your head and bade fond and devilishly foolish farewells to loved ones whose happiness you had cinched by betaking your own most undesirable self to a very warm place, judging by the messages wafted back; and you have most obstinately declined to realize up to date that you were rescued with the others."

"Happy delirium! Now I can't help realizing the unwelcome fact. Oh, you can't understand! You don't know, or you wouldn't wonder that I dread to begin it all over again . . . Bonnor doesn't love me, never has, never will; and if Cecil had gone down she would no longer have had any reason for concealing her hate. She reminded me of it, with her last breath—flung the words at me as she was sinking—God, what an effort I made—and failed! Who saved us? But never mind; it makes little difference. Don't look so blamed dazed! Bonnor and I can't be expected to keep up a continuous performance, even for such blooming idiots as made up our audience."

Captain Bonnor gently but firmly pushed him back on his pillows. "Griswold called it nervous shock and ordered quiet," he argued, as if with himself, "but what you need, it strikes me, is a safety valve, and I'm it. Just go ahead, old man, and leave the lid off. Volcanoes would blow the world to smithereens if it weren't for occasional spots of thin crust. You have disclosed a devil of a mess, my dear fellow, in your excitement, and I may as well know the rest of it. Nothing is quite clear to me except that you and my cousin are preparing a surprise that will lay it all over anything you have yet afforded in that line, and I'm going to head it off if I can. Come, now, tell me calmly the whole thing; if anybody would fight, bleed and die for you two, I'm the man."

Dick had always to fight against confidential moods when alone with this homely, big fellow, and now the temp-

tation was irresistible. He confessed unsparingly every mistake he had made from his first blind inappreciation to the last act of insulting jealousy. He forgot many instances of patience and self-restraint to his own credit; but uncovered the tumult of his soul that had not always found outward expression. He was more successful than he was aware of in conveying to his listener what it had been to love as he loved and not know whether the response were indifference or endurance. He owned defiantly to having used every means in his power to penetrate her reserve, exercising privileges none but a husband-lover would have dared assume, and his confessor smiled grimly when appealed to for confirmation: "You understand, old man? It was like words with a double meaning. The unwise wouldn't be hurt, and the too wise would be found out. If Bonnor loved me it would be all right; if she did not she would betray her aversion. But she never did, never—because of the child, you know—and I was alternately in heaven and hell, but always fiercely happy in the knowledge that Cecil bound her to me."

He closed his eyes and shuddered. Words were not necessary to show the trend of future fears.

The quivering muscles, throbbing pulses and short breathing alarmed Captain Bonnor more than exaggerated utterances and any amount of wild talk, and he tried to press the nervous hands, but Dick threw him off.

"It's no use—we have been too near death together for me to blind myself any longer to what she is enduring for the child's sake, and I am going away—"

"And leave her to the eager consolation of a legion of old lovers?" said his wife's cousin, with a dangerous gleam in his eyes. He was in deadly earnest, but he also knew his man, in spite of the selfish ravings to which he had been an amazed listener.

"Do you believe that any man would dare—?"

"Worship at the shrine you had deserted?" Captain Bonnor finished coolly.

"Humph! Do you think that in this day of easy divorces a woman desirable as Bonnor Balfour would be permitted to feed on her pride for a man whose vanity demands a feast where others would be content with crumbs?"

"You have someone in mind," Dick said, with clenched teeth, and ominously calm. "Who is it?"

"Merriwether, Irving, myself—why, dammit, sir, do you expect men, whose every breath is a longing for her, to stand by and see her mount the funeral pyre of your consuming egotism?"

"You!" wondered Dick, deaf to the rest.

The two men stared at each other from their enforced position, Balfour lying back among his pillows and Captain Bonnor sitting on the edge of the bed for emergencies. There was neither bravado nor flinching in the eyes of the latter—he would have lain down in quicksand to let his cousin step to safety—and Dick's met them without anger, fear or contempt, but with sorrow and amazement beyond expression. He felt no pang of jealousy. There was something sacred in the quiet revelation—sacrificial, immolating, and potential for evoking loyalty and selfishness in others.

"I might have guessed," he said regretfully. "No one was ever so thoughtful of her as you. But you seemed such close kin!"

The soldier in Captain Bonnor had been ready for fight, but the friend was bowled over by such unexpected tactics, and he exclaimed testily: "Damn the relationship! I'd have risked albinos, idiots, Lord knows what, if I'd thought there was any chance for me!"

Balfour laughed outright—as perhaps his conscience-stricken nurse intended that he should—and there followed a moment of embarrassed silence. Dick broke it with a sigh. "Well, finish your job, old man; what do you advise me to do?"

"Turn a shower on your temperament, for one thing, and take life a trifle less melodramatically. A few neglected opportunities might set your

wife to thinking; and incidentally it mightn't do any harm to let her know that it isn't much more flattering to one's vanity to be married for a child than for money. If she doesn't love you—though damme if I can see how she has ever stood you if she doesn't!—you have the satisfaction of knowing that no other man has her heart, if she has any, and if she hasn't—well, Nature sometimes finds ways of remedying deficiencies of that sort in women."

That Dick could laugh was reassuring, and he reverted to his own betrayal with the less embarrassment, "How about myself—shall I go?"

"No!" thundered Dick, with affection, confidence and respect in voice and grasp of the hand.

"Very well. I really would like to stay and see what is to be the upshot of this affair with the little Girard. She's a dear little trick—nothing complicated or uncertain about her; just a little scrap of throbbing, loving femininity!"

He sauntered over to the window, having appropriated the pistol—that the doctor might have no questions to ask—where his preoccupation and broad back seemed to discourage further talk.

Dick lay for a while watching him. "A man's strength and courage combined with a woman's tact and tenderness—noble fellow!" he murmured and dropped off to sleep in exhaustion.

Dr. Griswold returned, studied his face closely, listened to his breathing, felt his pulse and nodded in satisfaction. "He will be all right by morning. Wonderful change—good nurse, sir. I'm obliged to you. Extraordinary case—most extraordinary! I'll just look in on my other patients. You—er—wouldn't mind resting on that couch tonight?"

"I sha'n't leave him, you can rest assured."

XVIII

MISS GIRARD and Captain Bonnor were in the summer house, talking earnestly and lugubriously.

"If you think you ought to go, I suppose I should, too," he admitted dolefully.

"Don't you agree with me? Just think how near they came to losing each other. I'm sure we should want to be alone under the circumstances—"

"I prefer being alone under the honeysuckle and jasmine."

"If we were married—either of us, to anybody—oh, you know what I mean!"

He came to her rescue; she was so nearly ready to cry.

"You are right, of course, but I was too selfish to see it. I'll have to have a letter, or telegram, or something, I presume."

"Nothing of the sort!" she said contemptuously. "Just say you must go, and go. I have told Mrs. Balfour, and she merely said: 'Must you, dear? But you will come again?' She understood. What a strain it has been on her, poor darling! And such a shock! Cecil, I fear, is going to be ill, and Mr. Balfour looks on the verge of nervous prostration. I'm sure they would like to be alone."

"And where do you go?"

"I am prepared to pay my debt now, so you will not need to send a dun," she laughed, a little nervously, and handed him a small flat package she drew from the folds of her crushed ribbon belt.

"'An each tear were a jewel'—didn't somebody say something like that?" he asked, undoing the dainty wrapping. He expected to find a witty reminder of the incident in the woods—a souvenir of her wrath and a memorial to the dog—and when, instead, a blaze of diamonds flared into his astonished eyes he flushed and handed it back haughtily.

"I have never taken usury, Miss Girard."

Whether or not his cousin had made money his sensitive point, the fact remained that such it was, and it is not improbable that her avowed intention of making him any sort of bridal present she pleased had hindered the consummation she so devoutly wished.

"You—you—oh, you won't, you can't refuse it!" Rhey implored, with

alarm or chagrin, he did not know which.

She looked such a mere child, he forgot his many doubts as to her unsophistication and spoke more gently. "You must pardon me if I seem unappreciative, but—"

"But—but, Captain Bonnor, you don't even know what it is."

"I saw enough to know that it is a more valuable gift than I can accept from you—unless, unless, Rhey, it contains your image."

"How dare you imagine I would do such a thing!" she cried, the indignant tears quenching the fire in her shamed eyes.

"How dare you imagine I would accept for that moment of innocent abandon a highwayman's booty?"

"Would you have me pay for a hundred dollar cry with a—a five cent whistle?" she retorted, the comparison suggested by recollection of how the dog had been summoned.

"It didn't require so much as a penny whistle to get that dog on the scene," he smiled, somewhat mollified by the laughter shining through her tears.

"Well, that wouldn't legally justify a reduction of the reward, I'm sure—which brings us back to our starting point. I see I shall have to explain. Dear, but men are stupid! Serves me right, perhaps, but all the same I think you are simply horrid."

"Others have advised me to change my face."

"I never intimated anything of the kind. I think your face is beautiful—compared with your disposition."

Captain Bonnor roared. As little was to be gained by arguing with a contradictory, bewildering, tempting creature like Rhey Girard, he capitulated unheroically.

"Very well, let me look at the—er—whatever it is—again." He took the box from her hands, which were trembling so he felt he had been a brute. He lifted out, gingerly, the brilliant bauble that might serve for stamps, pins or matches. The bottom was rough gold, the sides and top a closely woven mesh

of something dark and silky looking and pliable except for a lettering in small diamonds that almost covered the top. He easily made out his own monogram.

"If you had only left off the stones!" he complained, loath to refuse a gift so dainty, odd and characteristic of the giver.

"Oh, bother! I could pick them out and throw at the birds—but it is the dark part that I can't do with as I wish. It's a—a 'guerdon of gratitude,' they called it, and is made of my hair."

"Rhey!" he cried, but she eluded him and started around the fountain, to the opposite side of the summer house. He took possession of the only exit.

"Please, please let me explain. It isn't half so dreadful as you think!"

"Then come back and tell me about it."

"Really and truly, there is nothing sentimental in it."

"Why then should you be so frightened?"

"You jump so at conclusions!"

"I'll jump this fountain if you don't come around here."

"Let me tell you about the box," she pleaded, across the basin of water. Each had drawn as near the edge of the fountain pool as possible without falling in, and they were looking and talking through the tinkling little shower.

"It was just one of those silly school-girl vows, and we gave our word of honor—"

"I'll give you my word of honor if you'll come back and sit by me."

"Oh, please let me tell you about the box first!"

"I don't want the box unless you trust me."

She came around at once, and they resumed their seats on the old gnarled settle, with honeysuckle and jasmine screening them as behind a fragrant curtain.

"Three of us had crazy little trinkets made of our hair, to be given to the first person to render us some great service—the very first person, you know, not somebody we wanted to keep it for, or anything like that."

"I understand," he said gravely. "You would have given it to the dog if he could have used it—"

"Yes, yes!"

"And had his monogram in diamonds if he had had a—"

"Of course not! It wasn't finished up until needed. You don't suppose Louise's and Mabel's were just like mine when they gave them to the nursery maid and the policeman?"

"I didn't know before that a nursery maid and a policeman were my fellow heroes."

"You could learn a lot by listening."

"I'm all ears—except what's eyes. Haven't any use for a heart, or arms, or lips. Stop, little tangent! I'm not going to break my word."

"Oh," she breathed, half a sob, "why did I do it?"

"Because you have the most grateful heart and exquisite taste in all the world, and what you give must be worthy of the giver."

"No—of the favor. And do you not know that I should a thousand times rather have been drowned at the sea-shore or thrown from a horse in the park than to have let those coarse, cruel people know how they had humiliated me?"

"You did not tell me that anyone had been cruel to you and humiliated you; tell me now."

"I couldn't—not you."

Her face was so hot and her eyes so near overflowing that he looked away and began to talk to the little "guerdon of gratitude" in his hand. "I shall keep you close to my heart, and if you should chance to stop a bullet—What, shuddering? A soldier's sweet-heart must laugh at danger and be his mascot. I wonder, when I come back and ask you to be my wife, what will be your answer, Rhey?"

Her face flushed and paled, and her breath came quick and sharp, as on the day so vividly present to the mind of each. "I would give all I possess to be able to make you feel uncertain of it!" she murmured, gazing at him in defiant fascination.

"I don't want to be uncertain, little

wife-to-be. A soldier's life is full of that sort of thing."

XIX

CECIL was asleep in his little white casket beneath green sod and masses of flowers renewed each day; his god-mother was shut in with her irreconcilable grief, and the father was on his way to China on a secret diplomatic mission for the Government in behalf of the besieged legations at Pekin.

So rapidly had events trod one upon the heels of the other in the Balfour household that the tongues of gossip were paralyzed.

The Dalrays and Mrs. Balfour, Senior, were abroad, and as Bonnor received no one and went nowhere, there wasn't an obtainable shred of information to which to pin a theory.

Acute capillary bronchitis had carried off little Cecil before it was realized that he was seriously ill, and nervous prostration brought Bonnor so close to the grave that none but nurses and physician saw her for weeks. Her husband's presence acted so strongly as a reminder of her lost idol that, at the mere sight of him, she would shriek, "Cecil! Cecil! Cecil!" to the point of exhaustion, and Dr. Griswold, mindful of secrets half revealed in delirium, forbade him her room.

His mother and sister had been in mid-ocean when the child died, and their return was useless when, in the course of time, they received the sad tidings.

When Bonnor was at last physically out of danger, but morbidly averse to seeing her husband who was, palpably to everybody, the mature counterpart of the dead child, the opportunity came for Dick to do his country a service with some accidental information he had picked up in his years of wanderings, and he seized it to release himself from a position that was torture. Dr. Griswold approved. He was fighting for his patient's reason, and he had not been able to solve the mystery of the relation between husband and wife.

Dick left a brief note of farewell which he made sure of his wife's receiving. "The mission I am going upon," he wrote her, "is one of seemingly great danger—in reality, nothing of the sort; but unless you wish me to return the world need not be the wiser. For the next two months you will be able to obtain my address from the President. After that, I will arrange with my London bankers. You have my assent to anything that will be for your happiness; and if, for any reason whatsoever, you may wish me to return, you have only to write or cable me."

He had gone quietly into her room, put the letter into her cold, thin hands, kissing them as if they had been the hands of the dead, and without a word or glance gone out again, to leave at once on his long and indefinite journey.

The two months were almost up, his mission accomplished, his work done, and he was merely waiting—not in expectation, but in fulfillment of his word.

When, under cover of his country's seal, he received the cabled message of two words: "Come home," he knew what a reprieve is to a man condemned to death.

Not until he was many days on his homeward journey did he begin to question what the summons might mean. Did she want to be legally freed? No, not that yet . . . Had tongues begun to wag so loudly as to penetrate even to her seclusion and make her turn to him as a safeguard of her pride as he had been of her possession of the child? He could smile at the fancy of such a need, for it would not be so vital as that of the child, and she would not feel that she must deceive him as well as the world. He felt that he could be almost happy in the mere possession of her again if he could be sure of her attitude toward him—know that she was acting no part, pretending nothing, enduring nothing, even giving nothing while accepting all . . . Then there came a day when a little dead body from the steerage received burial at sea, and he saw the mother, who had shown fear and loathing of her big

brute of a husband, turn to him with appealing surrender and clasp her empty arms about his neck—because he was the father of her child. Would to God Cecil might have been his and Bonnor's—that the loss might have been shared! . . . Then he pictured her worn out with her lonely struggle, yielding because there was no strength left to fight, calling him home for the end.

Days like that would keep him in his steamer chair for hours at a time, with eyes closed and breath almost bated lest he should be too late.

Over and over again during the tedious weeks of returning would he probe his subconsciousness for a warning of that to which he was coming. Was it to the bedside of the dying? Or to a weary, broken creature, too tired to resist longer? Or to wrecked womanhood rebellious and desperate, longing for one with whom to share her misery? Or to a sweetly resigned Bonnor, ready to take up the burden of life and dutifully fulfill the obligation imposed by the child for whom the flower of girlhood and wifehood had been sacrificed?

None of his mental pictures was a bright one, for his palette and brushes had been washed of all but somber colors, and life was to be an atonement, not a festival.

He reached home one stormy night in February, unwelcomed and unobserved. The sound of his latchkey grated on his nerves like the rusty creakings of a door to a tomb, and when he had gotten as far as the library his limbs gave out from sheer nervousness, and he sank into a dear, familiar chair by his own fireside.

The flames leaped and crackled cheerily and warmed his very heart with their good omen. Surely Death or dark visaged Grief could not be hovering over so orderly and cheerful a home.

It was not the same Richard Balfour as had sat in the same chair, in the same room, either of the two other nights when soul and body and all that

was of him were in rebellion. Selflessness had slipped its thongs in the clash between me and thee, mine and thine, self and another. The dominant question was no longer: How may I be happy? but: How may I make her happy? and he had come home determined to find the way—tenderly, firmly, surely, but without force or haste. His unceasing prayer was that it might not be too late.

He heard the faint, soft sweep of woman's draperies, and knew from the sound, from the fragrance of a presence, that Bonnor was coming into the room—that soon, there in the firelight, they would be face to face, and he would know what the future held for them.

How could he best reveal his presence without startling her? He dared not move or speak. Perhaps if she came upon him asleep— His lids closed over eyes aching for the vision coming within their range, and he could not breathe till he heard the little saving cry of recognition.

She dropped down on the hassock beside him and laid her head against his arm with passionate pressure. His other arm gently encircled her, and he bowed his head upon hers. No word was spoken in that rapturous moment of union and reunion, nor for yet another moment, as they looked into each other's eyes through a mist of tears.

"You love me?" he said, marveling, in an awed whisper, hardly daring sound or motion.

"Was there ever a time I did not love you?" she questioned dreamily, of her own heart rather than of him. "Cecil was you, and you were Cecil, and when I lost him—" her voice caught in a sob and she laid her head on his knees. But only for a moment—too brief for him to know what to do other than tighten his arm about her—and when she lifted her face to his, with eyes smiling through a veil of mystery, he could but marvel at what he had feared and what he had found.

Not white, emaciated, grief-stricken; not anxious, thoughtful, cold; not subdued, resigned, submissive—but a soft

roundness of face and form, a light in the eyes, color in cheek and lips, and youthfulness beyond all recollection of her, yet, withal, a maturity that five years of care and responsibility of a child had not given her.

"I loved you as inseparable beings until that morning—"

"When I awakened you, my dreamer!"

"And I felt as Eve must have felt when she had eaten of the tree of knowledge—my soul lying bare before you! Not you, my Adam, sharing the new self-consciousness, but a being from some older, wiser planet, mocking my shame while holding me in your arms and kissing away my breath and reason."

"But I spoke falsely with my tongue, darling, while my eyes and lips and arms were fiercely proclaiming: 'I love you! I love you! I love you!'"

"Not me, but the wanton princess of your imagination, conjured from realized ambition and suggestive environment that conveyed more to your experience than it meant in my ignorance."

"Was that what that moment was to you?" he wondered in self-reproachful amazement.

"Yes, then and afterwards, when your tongue uttered other cruel, humiliating truths."

"Not truths—mad, resentful ravings. And only twice, my darling, believe me; but those two enough for a lifetime's repentance. One of them you overheard, and the other must have come to you in a way—"

"To break my finger, if not my heart," she smiled ruefully.

He drew in his breath with a sharp sound and pressed his lips to the hand that had suffered. "Ira Irving shall pay for it with every bone in his contemptible body!"

"Only heart wounds count—and you alone can inflict those," she said, dismissing the subject of Ira Irving as a negligible intrusion into this sacred hour of reunion.

He felt the rebuke keenly, and vowed to himself never to inflict another nor

furnish weapon to an enemy. Aloud he said, "Forgive me!"

"Did you ever despise yourself, Dick?"

"I am doing so this minute!"

"Oh, don't!" she cried, in a strange, frightened protest. "It is a poison, a drug, a miasma that stifles, benumbs, distorts the best impulses of one's nature! That is why I hated you—because you made me despise myself."

"But why, dearest, why should you have despised yourself? I awakened you with love—"

"But not with love like that you awakened. Yours came Minerva-like, full panoplied from the head of Jupiter; mine was born like blind Cupid, from the union of my own heart and nature. Yours was wisdom, mine innocence; and with knowledge came a sickening self-disgust, a horrible abasement of pride, that I had given all in exchange for a mean passion that, for expediency, could so readily and skillfully simulate the miracle of love."

"How you must have despised me!" he murmured wonderingly, biding his time for exoneration rather than lose this revelation of her heart.

"If I only could have done so!" she sighed regretfully. "I could hate, but not despise you—you were so masterful, and gloriously venturesome and superbly loyal in your surrender! I could even weigh your love scornfully in the balance with that of other men, and find nothing to your advantage, save the accident of circumstances, but the impossibility of imagining any other man the father of Cecil made the comparison ineffectual. The disappointment of not having won your heart under the only circumstances of my life that could have carried conviction was bitter and lasting—like pique, perhaps, in a beautiful woman when tribute is paid to her gown. I compared the moment of our betrothal with that of our awakening—the days before with the days after—and I hated, hated, hated you and despised myself! That I should thrill beneath such caresses"—his arm tightened about her—"filled me with self-contempt, and I had to

find some reason for it, or despise myself beyond endurance. My Balm of Gilead was, you can guess, Cecil. Cecil's father could not be to me as other men. There could be nothing strange in no physical shrinking from one so wholly the prototype of the child I adored. I even persuaded myself it was necessary that I should hold your fancy, lest you tire of me and separate—" He only held her the closer and stifled a groan at recollection of causes he had given her and the confirmation of reveries upon the Sabine women and the Cossack slaves. "I could keep my self-respect, don't you see, dear, by finding reasons for responding to your love—and oh, the luxury of it, when in self-defense or for Cecil's sake I could yield without that horrible sense of shame—"

"It was not acting—you were not pretending— Tell me the truth, for God's sake, dear! If it was you—you—then those few weeks hold memories that will flood my entire life with happiness!"

"I was myself only when I loved you! Dick, Dick, can't you understand?"

He shook his head and controlled the longing to gather her to his heart in wordless reconciliation—for she was so wonderful and adorable, with her arms folded across his knees and her face lifted to his in excited appeal, as she poured forth the things that had been in her heart and mind those days of mystery and misery, that he was loath to break the spell. "I don't ever hope to understand—you beautiful, bewildering thing! But I am content to worship and wonder and wait."

The old trick of eyes dilating, instead of brows frowning, in perplexity brought him partly back to earth as she asked, "What especially would you like to know?"

"Two things—one very small and the other big, so big that I may have to await the development of a sixth sense to comprehend it! But the little one you may tell me now, if you will: what was in your hand the day I found both the rose and the note?"

"The rose, of course! Oh, but you were stupid at times, dear!"

Anything so of the earth earthy was more than flesh and blood could stand, and Dick was not yet wholly sublimated. He got to his feet with the old impetuosity, drawing her with him and holding her at arm's length, studying, devouring her with his eyes. "Bonnor! Bonnor! I cannot wait to find it out for myself; tell it to me—the mystery, the radiance of you, the difference from anything I hoped or dreaded! If it is love that wrought the miracle, when did you surrender to it—what revealed you to yourself—when did it begin?"

"Might I not have learned it sooner if I had been uncertain of you—or jealous?" she delayed, as if fearful of the supreme moment.

"I would have waited an eternity before I'd have had you seared in the hell of jealousy!" he said with vehemence that almost frightened; then he

drew her to him and laid her head in the hollow of his arm, as on the morning when their love was born, and said softly: "Heaven is the source of the white mystery of your eyes, your smile, your color, warmth, softness—the radiance of you, and I would know the miracle."

His heart was vibrant with the dear name she had once declared rankled as did no other epithet, and which he had angrily vowed not soon again to apply to her, and he longed to make her utter it in sweet acknowledgment.

"Tell me, Bonnor Balfour, who are you—what are you more than god-mother of my child?" he urged tenderly, insistently, pleadingly.

"Mother!"

He started, and held her from him a moment in glad amazement; then he crushed her to him with tender reservation of strength and a divine reverence, whispering love's epitome of all the ages, "My wife!"



HAVE WE FORGOTTEN?

By ETHEL M. KELLEY

HAVE we forgotten, Love, the eagerness
That urged our lips to their first sweet caress,
The trembling kiss I set upon your brow
To seal the love that is so tranquil now
It needs no words its fervor to express?

Is there no tenderness we need confess?
Busy with life, we feel the moments press
So poignantly upon us, I and thou—
Have we forgotten, Love?

Nay, sweetheart, those who love each other less
May need to name the treasure they possess,
Exchange the oft reiterated vow;
But we who live as Love has taught us how,
Whose every hour bears sympathy's impress,
Have we forgotten, Love?

ALOHA OE

By JACK LONDON

*Aloha oe, Aloha oe, e ke onaona no ho ika lipo,
A fond embrace, ahoi ae au, until we meet again.
—Hawaiian Farewell.*

NEVER are there such departures as from the dock at Honolulu. The great transport lay with steam up, ready to pull out. A thousand persons were on her decks; five thousand stood on the wharf. Up and down the long gangway passed native princes and princesses, sugar kings and the high officials of the Territory. Beyond, in long lines, kept in order by the native police, were the carriages and motor cars of the Honolulu aristocracy. On the wharf the Royal Hawaiian Band played "Aloha Oe," and when it finished, a stringed orchestra of native musicians on board the transport took up the same sobbing strains, the native woman singer's voice rising bird-like above the instruments and the hubbub of departure. It was a silver reed, sounding its clear, unmistakable note in the great diapason of farewell.

Forward, on the lower deck, the rail was lined six deep with khaki-clad young boys, whose bronzed faces told of three years' campaigning under the sun. But the farewell was not for them. Nor was it for the white-clad captain on the lofty bridge, remote as the stars, gazing down upon the tumult and ferment of life beneath him. Nor was the farewell for the young officers farther aft, returning from the Philippines, nor for the white-faced, climate-ravaged women by their sides. Just aft the gangway, on the promenade deck, stood a score of United States Senators with their wives and daughters—the Senatorial junketing party that for a month had been dined and

wined, surfeited with statistics and dragged up volcanic hill and down lava dale to behold the glories and resources of Hawaii. It was for the junketing party that the transport had called in at Honolulu, and it was to the junketing party that Honolulu was saying good-bye.

The Senators were garlanded and be-decked with flowers. Senator Jeremy Sambrooke's stout neck and portly bosom were burdened with a dozen wreaths. Out of this mass of bloom and blossom projected his head and the greater portion of his freshly sunburned and perspiring face. He thought the flowers an abomination, and as he looked out over the multitude on the wharf it was with a statistical eye that saw none of the beauty, but that peered into the labor-power, the factories, the railroads and the plantations that lay back of the multitude and of which the multitude was representative. He saw resources and thought development, and he was too busy with dreams of material achievement and empire to notice his daughter at his side, talking with a young fellow in a natty summer suit and straw hat, whose eager eyes seemed only for her and never left her face. Had Senator Jeremy had eyes for his daughter, he would have seen that, in place of the young girl of fifteen he had brought to Hawaii a short month before, he was now taking away with him a woman.

Hawaii has a ripening climate, and Dorothy Sambrooke had been exposed to it under exceptionally ripening circumstances. Slender, pale, with blue eyes a trifle tired from poring over the pages of books and trying to muddle

into an understanding of life—such she had been the month before. But now the eyes were warm instead of tired, the cheeks were touched with the sun, and the body gave the first hint and promise of swelling lines. During that month she had left books alone, for she had found greater joy in reading from the book of life. She had ridden horses, climbed volcanoes, and learned surf swimming. The tropics had entered into her blood, and she was aglow with the warmth and color and sunshine. And for a month she had been in the company of a man—Stephen Knight, athlete, surfboard rider, a bronzed god of the sea who bitted the crashing breakers, leaped upon their backs and rode them in to shore.

Dorothy Sambrooke was unaware of the change. Her consciousness was still that of a young girl, and she was surprised and troubled by Steve's conduct in this hour of saying good-bye. She had looked upon him as her playfellow, and for the month he had been her playfellow; but now he was not parting like a playfellow. He talked excitedly and disconnectedly, or was silent, by fits and starts. Sometimes he did not hear what she was saying, or if he did, failed to respond in his wonted manner. She was perturbed by the way he looked at her. She had not known before that he had such blazing eyes. There was something in his eyes that was terrifying. She could not face it, and her own eyes continually drooped before it. Yet there was something alluring about it, as well, and she continually returned to catch a glimpse of that blazing, imperious, yearning something that she had never seen in human eyes before. And she was herself strangely bewildered and excited.

The transport's huge whistle blew a deafening blast, and the flower-crowned multitude surged closer to the side of the dock. Dorothy Sambrooke's fingers were pressed to her ears; and as she made a *moue* of distaste at the outrage of sound, she noticed again the imperious, yearning blaze in Steve's eyes. He was not looking at her, but at her ears, delicately pink and transparent in

the slanting rays of the afternoon sun. Curious and fascinated, she gazed at that strange something in his eyes until he saw that he had been caught. She saw his cheeks flush darkly and heard him utter inarticulately. He was plainly embarrassed, and she was aware of embarrassment herself. Stewards were going about nervously begging shore-going persons to be gone. Steve put out his hand. When she felt the grip of the fingers that had gripped hers a thousand times on surfboards and lava slopes, she heard the words of the song with a new understanding as they sobbed in the Hawaiian woman's silver throat:

*"Ka halia ko aloha kai hiki mai,
Ke hone ae nei i ku'u manawa,
O oe no ka'u aloha
A loko e hana nei."*

Steve had taught her air and words and meaning—so she had thought, till in this instant; and in this instant of the last fingerclasp and warm contact of palms she divined for the first time the real meaning of the song. She scarcely saw him go, nor could she note him on the crowded gangway, for she was deep in a memory-maze, living over the four weeks just past, rereading events in the light of revelation.

When the Senatorial party had landed, Steve had been one of the committee of entertainment. It was he who had given them their first exhibition of surf riding, out at Waikiki Beach, paddling his narrow board seaward until he became a disappearing speck, and then, suddenly reappearing, rising like a sea god from out of the welter of spume and churning white—rising swiftly higher and higher, shoulders and chest and loins and limbs, until he stood poised on the smoking crest of a mighty, mile-long billow, his feet buried in the flying foam, hurling beachward with the speed of an express train and stepping calmly ashore at their astounded feet. That had been her first glimpse of Steve. He had been the youngest man on the committee, a youth, himself, of twenty. He had not entertained by speechmaking, nor had he shone decoratively at receptions.

It was in the breakers at Waikiki, in the wild cattle drive on Mauna Kea, and in the breaking yard of the Haleakala Ranch that he had performed his share of the entertaining.

She had not cared for the interminable statistics and eternal speechmaking of the other members of the committee. Neither had Steve. And it was with Steve that she had stolen away from the open air feast at Hamakua, and from Abe Louisson, the coffee planter, who had talked coffee, coffee, nothing but coffee, for two mortal hours. It was then, as they rode among the tree ferns, that Steve had taught her the words of "Aloha Oe," the song that had been sung to the visiting Senators at every village, ranch and plantation departure.

Steve and she had been much together from the first. He had been her playfellow. She had taken possession of him while her father had been occupied in taking possession of the statistics of the island territory. She was too gentle to tyrannize over her playfellow, yet she had ruled him abjectly, except when in canoe, or on horse or surfboard, at which times he had taken charge and she had rendered obedience. And now, with this last singing of the song, as the lines were cast off and the big transport began backing slowly out from the dock, she knew that Steve was something more to her than playfellow.

Five thousand voices were singing "Aloha Oe"—"My love be with you till we meet again"—and in that first moment of known love she realized that she and Steve were being torn apart. When would they ever meet again? He had taught her those words himself. She remembered listening as he sang them over and over under the *hau* tree at Waikiki. Had it been prophesy? And she had admired his singing. She had told him that he sang with such expression. She laughed aloud, hysterically, at the recollection. With such expression!—when he had been pouring his heart out in his voice. She knew now, and it was too late. Why had he not spoken? Then she realized that

girls of her age did not marry. But girls of her age did marry . . . in Hawaii, was her instant thought. Hawaii had ripened her—Hawaii, where flesh is golden and where women are all ripe and sun-kissed.

Vainly she scanned the packed multitude on the dock. What had become of him? She felt that she could pay any price for one more glimpse of him, and she almost hoped that some mortal sickness would strike the lonely captain on the bridge and delay departure. For the first time in her life she looked at her father with a calculating eye, and as she did she noted with newborn fear the lines of will and determination. It would be terrible to oppose him. And what chance would she have in such a struggle? But why had Steve not spoken? Now it was too late. Why had he not spoken under the *hau* tree at Waikiki?

And then, with a great sinking of the heart, it came to her that she knew why. What was it she had heard one day? Oh, yes, it was at Mrs. Stanton's tea, that afternoon when the ladies of the "Missionary Crowd" had entertained the ladies of the Senatorial party. It was Mrs. Hodgkins, the tall blonde woman, who had asked the question. The scene came back to her vividly—the broad *lanai*, the tropic flowers, the noiseless Asiatic attendants, the hum of the voices of the many women, and the question Mrs. Hodgkins had asked in the group next to her. Mrs. Hodgkins had been away on the mainland for years, and was evidently inquiring after old island friends of her maiden days. "What has become of Susie Maydwell?" was the question she had asked. "Oh, we never see her any more; she married Willie Kupele," another island woman answered. And Senator Behrend's wife laughed and wanted to know why matrimony had affected Susie Maydwell's friendships. "*Hapa-haole*," was the answer; "he was a half-caste, you know, and we of the Islands have to think about our children."

Dorothy turned to her father, resolved to put it to the test.

"Papa, if Steve ever comes to the

United States, mayn't he come and see us some time?"

"Who? Steve?"

"Yes, Stephen Knight—you know him. You said good-bye to him not five minutes ago. Mayn't he, if he happens to be in the United States some time, come and see us?"

"Certainly not," Jeremy Sambrooke answered shortly. "Stephen Knight is a *hapa-haole* and you know what that means."

"Oh," Dorothy said faintly, in acquiescence, while she felt a numb despair creep into her heart.

Steve was not a *hapa-haole*—she knew that; but she did know that a quarter-strain of tropic sunshine streamed in his veins, and she knew that that was sufficient to put him outside the marriage pale. It was a strange world. There was the Honorable A. S. Cleghorn, who had married a dusky princess of the Kamehameha blood, yet men considered it an honor to know him, and the most exclusive women of the ultra-exclusive "Missionary Crowd" were to be seen at his afternoon teas. And there was Steve. No one had disapproved of his teaching her to ride a surfboard, nor of his leading her by the hand through the perilous places of the crater of Kilauea. He could have dinner with her and her father, dance with her, be a member of the entertainment committee; but because there was tropic sunshine in his veins he could not marry her.

And he didn't show it. One had to be told to know. And he was so good-looking. The picture of him limned itself on her inner vision, and before she was aware she was pleasuring in the memory of the grace of his magnificent body, of his splendid shoulders, of the power in him that tossed her lightly on a horse, bore her safely through the thundering breakers, or towed her at the end of an alpenstock up the stern lava crest of the House of the Sun. There was something subtler and mysterious that she remembered, and that she was even then just beginning to understand—the aura of the male creature that is man, all man, masculine

man. She came to herself with a shock of shame at the thoughts she had been thinking. Her cheeks were dyed with the hot blood which quickly receded and left them pale at the thought that she would never see him again. The stem of the transport was already out in the stream, and the promenade deck was passing abreast of the end of the dock.

"There's Steve now," her father said. "Wave good-bye to him, Dorothy."

Steve was looking up at her with eager eyes, and he saw in her face what he had not seen before. By the rush of gladness into his own face she knew that he knew. The air was throbbing with the song—

My love to you.

My love be with you till we meet again.

There was no need for speech to tell their story. About her, passengers were flinging their garlands to their friends on the dock. Steve held up his hands and his eyes pleaded. She slipped her own garland over her head, but it had become entangled in the string of Oriental pearls that Mervin, an elderly sugar king, had placed around her neck when he drove her and her father down to the steamer.

She fought with the pearls that clung to the flowers. The transport was moving steadily on. Steve was already beneath her. This was the moment. The next moment and he would be past. She sobbed, and Jeremy Sambrooke glanced at her inquiringly.

"Dorothy!" he cried sharply.

She deliberately snapped the string, and, amid a shower of pearls, the flowers fell to the waiting lover. She gazed at him until the tears blinded her and she buried her face on the shoulder of Jeremy Sambrooke, who forgot his beloved statistics in wonderment at girl babies that insisted on growing up. The crowd sang on, the song growing fainter in the distance, but still melting with the sensuous love-languor of Hawaii, the words biting into her heart like acid because of their untruth.

*Aloha oe, Aloha oe, e ke onaona no ho ika lipo,
A fond embrace, ahoi as au, until we meet
again.*

MRS. SHELDON'S SALON

By HAROLD SUSMAN

"MRS. SHELDON has a salon," said Howard.
"Is that a promise or a threat?" said Eric.

"It is neither," said Howard. "It is merely a statement of a fact."

"Well?" said Eric.

"Well," said Howard, "I have been invited to go to Mrs. Sheldon's to-night. And I have been invited to bring someone along with me. I have asked two of my friends, but they have both declined. So now I am going to ask you. Would you care to go?"

"Yes," said Eric. "It might be amusing!"

"I don't see why it shouldn't be," said Howard.

So they went.

Mrs. Sheldon tried to be artistic, but she only succeeded in being untidy. She was tall and thin, loose and lanky. Her face was white, and her hair was red. Her nose was long, but her sight was short. There wasn't enough of her bodice, but there was too much of her skirt.

And her home! Oh, her home! It didn't look like a home at all! It looked like an auction room. It was full of odds and ends she had picked up here and there in her travels. Her travels had extended from Fourth Avenue to Sixth Avenue.

All of Mrs. Sheldon's friends "did" things. Mrs. Sheldon was one of the things they "did." Mrs. Sheldon kept open house. That was her idea of having a "salon."

When Howard and Eric arrived there were six of Mrs. Sheldon's friends already there. It truly looked

as though Mrs. Sheldon got her friends from the same places that she got her furniture, and in the same job lots.

There was an old actress with bad teeth, and a young painter with bad eyes; there was a woman with short hair, and a man with long hair; and there was a man who made up stories, and a woman who made up her face.

Everybody was talking, but nobody was listening.

"I used to be the toast of the town," said the Old Actress.

"You are still the toast of the town," said the Young Painter, "but the toast is somewhat stale!"

"Here is a toast to the toast of the town!" said Mrs. Sheldon.

They all drank to the Old Actress—in punch.

There was always punch at Mrs. Sheldon's. And there was always plenty of it.

"The woman of genius is as much masculine as feminine," said the Woman-With-the-Short-Hair. "That is what makes her a genius."

"And the man of genius is as much feminine as masculine," said the Man-With-the-Long-Hair. "That is what makes him a genius."

"Here is to Genius—masculine and feminine!" said Mrs. Sheldon.

They all drank to Genius, masculine and feminine—in punch.

"I am going to have another book," said the Man-Who-Made-Up-Stories.

"And I am going to have another husband," said the Woman-Who-Made-Up-Her-Face.

"And everybody is going to have another drink," said Mrs. Sheldon.

And everybody did.

And everybody had another.

And another.

The Old Actress told some things that had happened to her in the past. The Young Painter told some things that might happen to him in the future. The Woman-With-the-Short-Hair was afraid she wouldn't be understood. But the Man-With-the-Long-Hair was afraid he would be. The Man-Who-Made-Up-Stories told how he did it. But the Woman-Who-Made-Up-Her-Face didn't tell how she did it. And Mrs. Sheldon dispensed the punch.

Howard and Eric took it all in—the punch and the conversation. The punch got strong, but the conversation got stronger.

Though the punch got stronger, the puncher got weaker. Mrs. Sheldon was the puncher. Mrs. Sheldon got so weak that she stopped dispensing the punch. Instead of dispensing it, she dispensed with it. She fell down. And she didn't get up. And she didn't try to. And nobody helped her. And nobody tried to.

Mrs. Sheldon stayed on the floor. But she didn't look staid. She looked strayed.

The Woman-Who-Made-Up-Her-Face was almost as bad. She suggested the Tower of Pisa. She leaned, but she didn't fall.

The Man-Who-Made-Up-Stories made up one then and there. He said that he was not drunk.

The Old Actress almost went to sleep. And the Young Painter almost woke up.

The Woman-With-the-Short-Hair began to laugh. But the Man-With-the-Long-Hair began to cry.

"Let's take a drink," said Howard.

"No, let's take our departure," said Eric.

"Oh, let's make a compromise," said Howard. "You take a drink with me, and I'll take a departure with you!"

So they took a drink, and then they took their departure.

"That's not a salon," said Eric; "it's a—saloon!"

"Same thing," said Howard.



UNDER THE STARS

By ELSA BARKER

LOVE, you have made me dizzy with your eyes!

They are as deep and star-sown as the skies.

They reach above me in their bourneless blue—

O high, vast, swimming firmament of You!

Trembling I clutch your hand, so sure and strong—

As one who gazes on the stars too long,

Till he is dizzy with their awful height,

And the earth's motion through the trackless night—

Clings to the solid earth and veils his face,

Lest he be flung into the sea of space.

PLACE AUX DAMES

By VIVIAN LEE

THE Southmark hounds had given us a good run of forty minutes or so in fine open country, when they hit the pike and swung left-handed running along it. I was beginning to be afraid they had overrun the line, when they turned to the right, scrambled through a private hedge and made off across a field. The hedge was wired and stood on a bank. Galloping parallel to it, we came to two chains, swung between gateposts. Mrs. Hazard, without an instant's hesitation, rode at and cleared those chains. It took me in the solar plexus; bad enough to see a man do it, but a woman—ugh!

As we tracked home together, I spoke of the thing to Carstairs. Carstairs shrugged his shoulders.

"That was Mosby," he said. "Mosby's clever; but some day he and Mrs. Hazard will jump slap into he—into eternity together. I'll never forget the first ride she took on that horse!"

He reached absent-mindedly for my flask as he spoke. There was some very fine old port in it. He got the port and I got the story, which may or may not have been a fair exchange; at the moment I should have preferred the port.

"You know Southmark House used to belong to my wife's people," said Carstairs, handing back my empty flask. "So, when the Hazards were getting it into shape I saw a good deal of them, and of their friends; and I heard stories about the Hazards! Apparently, it was all common talk in New York how Hazard had married for money; how for years he had been in love with a Mrs. Mill-

wood. Mrs. Hazard knew it—everybody knew it! For a time after his marriage he behaved himself, but in two years they were at it again harder than ever. Mrs. Hazard dared not assert herself; so Mrs. Millwood came to her house, rode her horses and flaunted in her face dresses and jewels which 'everybody knew' Hazard had bought for her with his wife's money, until the affair became a crying scandal, and Mrs. Hazard, in desperation, gathered up her husband and her belongings and fled into the wilds of Virginia.

"At first, I discounted most of this stuff. As far as I could see, Hazard was a pretty good sort, contented here, interested in the place and in his dogs and horses and very fond of his wife; but then things began to happen.

"One afternoon Mrs. Hazard and I rode over to Durfee's to look at his colts. I have never seen her in such spirits; she seemed light-hearted as a girl, and full of nonsense. She looked at all the horses, tried most of them and chattered endlessly with Durfee. It was quite late when we started home, and we set out at a good clip; but about halfway we were stopped by a buggy with the top up, crawling down the middle of a sunken road. Shouts and whistles had no effect; the thing plodded stolidly along. When at last we squeezed by Mrs. Hazard's horse shied—I thought—at something on the bank, swerved against the buggy and bolted. I turned in my saddle to give the driver a piece of my mind and found myself staring into the faces of Hazard and a remarkably good-looking woman whom I had never

seen before. When I caught up with Mrs. Hazard I said to her stupidly, suspecting nothing wrong:

"Who was that pretty woman your husband was so absorbed in?"

"Was that Jack?" she said. 'I didn't see.'

"We rode home fast, she very silent. She said her horse pulled. He did; but when she dismounted his side was bloody with spurring. He was white, so it showed.

"The pretty stranger was not one of the guests at Southmark House; Hazard came in very late, alone. Mrs. Hazard talked and laughed more and louder than usual that evening, and her game of poker was inspired—or insane.

"I carried away a disagreeable impression of her face as she said good night; perhaps it might have been fatigue. I was rather done myself; we kept it up until nearly morning.

"A few days later the Southmark hounds had their first meet of the season. It promised to be a good day, and quite a field turned out—pretty much all the native contingent and a large party from Southmark House. I found the Southmark House party fairly simmering with excitement—because—

"The Millwood woman is here! And riding—could you believe it?—riding Mrs. Hazard's favorite horse! Could anything be more brazen? And just look what Mrs. Hazard's got!"

"I looked; faith, one way and another, there was plenty to look at. For one thing, Mrs. Hazard was riding the worst looking plug I have ever seen in the hunting field. You saw Mosby today. At his best, he's not apt to win prizes on conformation; but then—thinner if possible than he is now; his rough coat worn through on most of his salient angles; his mane and tail sunburnt and ragged—I'm sure there were burrs in them; trace marks plainly to be seen on his bony sides; and, as if to show him off to the best advantage, Mrs. Hazard perched on his back, immaculate in

the latest thing in safety habits, fresh from her London tailor, everything spick, span and new, even to her gloves and her saddle and bridle. I suspected her of playing for sympathy, for I knew there were better horses than that standing idle in the Southmark stables. I changed my mind before the day was out!

"As to Mrs. Millwood, I'd seen her before. As I'd half-suspected, she was Hazard's companion in the buggy ride of two evenings back; but, seeing her at dusk that way, I'd no conception how handsome she was—all warm browns, hair, eyebrows, lashes, eyes themselves, and to complete the picture she was riding a chestnut thoroughbred, whose coat just matched her hair. I knew the horse well; he was a great pet of Mrs. Hazard's and with her up nothing could touch him, but I had my doubts about his being heavy enough for Mrs. Millwood, who was a bit on the Juno order, while Mrs. Hazard was nothing but skin and bone and nerves.

"It was a good morning. Hounds found almost as soon as they were cast, and went away with a fine burst of music. Johnny Capell rode up beside me, grinning.

"We'll get all that's coming to us this morning," said he, pointing. I didn't know what he meant at first—and then I saw Flint's Run ahead of us, in the bottom of a narrow gully, with a rail at the top of each bank—just too steep for scrambling, just too wide to jump. That did for the field! Out of twenty of us, just three got over—Mrs. Hazard, Mrs. Millwood and I. They took it clean—I've always been sorry we didn't measure the distance. I had a fall, but the further rail was rotten, so there was no harm done, and I was soon up with the two women. They, with that discretion which distinguishes the sex in the field, were opening a hard day's hunting with a very pretty pounding match. Neck and neck they kept at it, through as hard an hour's riding as I've ever put in behind hounds; but at last the pace told on the chest-

nut; a heavy bit of plough finished him; he simply floundered over the boundary fence, dragging down an avalanche of stones. My own horse was about as bad, but Mosby was still going strong. As I crossed the wall, Mrs. Hazard was just riding at a snake fence; it was low and looked rotten, but to my astonishment Mosby gathered himself as for a tremendous obstacle, and took the thing with what looked like a foot to spare. I don't know why, but I scented danger, and shouted, but Mrs. Millwood, if she heard, did not heed; her horse rose—if you could call it rising!—for he breasted the fence; and the thing held, though it swayed and gave along its length. He turned completely over in midair, and horse and rider crashed horribly to the ground.

"There was a wire strung on the fence, as they wire the fences in Virginia—the wire running straight from point to point, while the fence zigzags below it.

"I spurred my beast through the field—he seemed like a horse in a nightmare with feet clogged as with lead—and scrambled over the broken fence. There was Mrs. Millwood's horse on his back, entangled in wire and broken timbers; I could not see her at all, but I knew too well where she was.

"Mrs. Hazard had dismounted and

together we dragged at the splintered rails, and prodded the spent horse to his feet. I remember the effort of turning my eyes, as if they belonged to somebody else, from him to what had been hidden beneath him. I'd rather not talk about it—you wouldn't want to hear.

"I took off my coat and we lifted her up and laid her on it. There seemed little else that we could do. Mosby was fresher than my horse, so Mrs. Hazard went for help, and I was left alone with that poor crushed fragment of humanity. I tried to listen for her heart, but could not for the surging in my ears; then I remembered my flask and rubbed her wrists with wine. Once she groaned faintly, and I thought her eyelids fluttered. It seemed a century of waiting. At last some negroes came, and, after another century, the doctor; but before that the awful, unmistakable change had passed over her—it would have made no difference if he had come before."

For a while we rode in silence. At last—

"Of course Mrs. Hazard didn't see the wire," I said.

Carstairs looked at me sharply.

"Of course not," said he.

"It was strange," I said.

"Very," said he. "Good night."



TRIOLET

By ROSALIE ARTHUR

IF each could have his heart's desire,
 Who knows how we should fare?
 Of lovely surfeit we might tire
 If each could have his heart's desire—
 As music swept from some strange lyre
 More sweet than man can bear.
 If each could have his heart's desire
 Who knows how we should fare?

THE HUNDRED AND FIFTH DREAM

By H. de VERE STACPOOLE

DANJURO, the curio dealer of Jinriksha Street, Nagasaki, gave me a cigarette.

He had just concluded a bargain over an ivory Musmée ten inches high, an ivory Musmée with a smile on her lips and an open ivory umbrella over her dainty head.

She was a dream!

I had been courting her for weeks, undecided as to whether I could make her my own; the price was terrific, but that frightened me less than the umbrella. How could I get that umbrella to England unbroken? It was paper-thin and traced with storks; it was, perhaps, the most beautiful thing about her, so beautiful that at last it seemed to me more beautiful than the Musmée herself. It grew in my mind like a mushroom, became a fixed idea. I dreamed of it at night, and woke to it in the morning.

I am perhaps the only man, except Bibi La Purée, who has fallen in love with an umbrella.

Ah, that umbrella! It haunts me still, and when the weather changes I feel it still—just as an old soldier feels his wounds.

But to return.

Danjuro, the curio dealer of Jinriksha Street, Nagasaki, gave me a cigarette.

He is a gentleman who gives very little away, but after a satisfactory deal his soul expands, and it is his custom to throw something in—a tiny rose tree in a pot, a ticket of admission to the Chinese theater, a trick fan, a grasshopper in a cage or something else equally valueless. A gift like this is

not so much a gift as a certificate that he has swindled you.

I had come that morning armed with a cheque book. I had made up my mind the night before that she was to be mine; the umbrella difficulty had, from brooding over, become an added attraction. To get it to England intact would be a feat to be proud of and it would add an interest to the voyage.

I had arrived at eight, and the bargaining began at the very door of Danjuro's shop, where the stork standing on the tortoise faces the dragon of flexible steel. He saw I was keen on the business and, by his manner, you would have imagined that he did not want to sell. An American lady had fallen in love with the "Tripping Musmée"; the American lady was due at any moment to call. He would not like to disappoint her; she was rich, very rich, like all Americans, and he, Danjuro, was poor. What could he do? Rents had to be paid; living, since the war, had become almost an impossibility. Look at the taxes!

Then we had tea, sitting on sea-green mats, and he placed the Musmée just where a golden shaft of sunlight struck the umbrella, so that it became a honey colored halo suffusing the rosebud face with its glow; so that my heart yearned and, taking my cheque book on my knee, I waved a stylographic pen.

No, it was no use writing out a cheque for that amount. Why waste a cheque? If the thing was beyond my means, it would be a wickedness for him, Danjuro, to urge me to buy it; besides, there were other things in the shop dirt cheap that would make a

better show. Let us understand one another, for we were both honest men.

He rose and put the Musmée away in a cupboard, and set in her place an Owari vase.

That was something I could be proud of, and there would be no difficulty in getting it to Europe unbroken. It was worth a hundred dollars, but, on account of a slight flaw, I could have it for fifty.

"Take it away," I said, with a sigh, and, with the cheque book on my knee, I wrote out a cheque for the sum he had asked, and the Musmée, umbrella and all, was mine.

Danjuro dried the writing, folded the cheque, placed it in the sleeve of his kimono and rose to his feet.

He hunted here and there, and at last, from a shelf filled with tiny gods and ivory *netsukes*, reached down with his clawlike hand a packet of cigarettes, and, taking a cigarette from the packet, handed it to me.

"There is *haschish* in it," said Danjuro. "They cost me five American dollars a packet; there are only twenty in a packet, and I am a poor man. But don't smoke it here."

"Thanks," I replied, and put it in my cigarette case. "And why, may I ask, do you object to my smoking it here?"

He waved his hand, indicating the demons and the dragons and the odd hobgoblin gods, the tortoises and the storks, the masks and the daggers, and Akudoji's frightful face shouting at me from the wall.

"Smoke it in a flower garden, and you will have pleasanter dreams than here."

I bowed, and, bowing with his hands on his knees, he saluted me and I departed. I passed down 'Riksha Street, which was gay as a scarf, and, humming like a *chamécen* string, kites shaped like fish floated in the blue air above the houses, for it was the Little Boys' Fête, a day of great rejoicing.

The festival had spread itself like a gaily colored carpet over the town, the fringes extending even to the bund, where the grave-faced merchants come and go, and even to the harbor, where

the hawks wheel over the blue water and perch on the spars of the deep sea ships, tramps and traders, tank steamers of the great oil company, and white Canadian Pacific boats from Vancouver, a thousand miles away across the blue.

It pursued me up the hill to my house with the sound of moon fiddles; it pursued me through the garden, where all the flowers of spring were blowing their colored trumpets to the sun and waving their painted banners to the wind; it pursued me across the veranda into my sitting room, where I sat down on the matting and clapped my hands for Plum Blossom to bring me an *hibachi* and some tea.

"*Hai Tadaima*," came a response from somewhere in the mysterious depths of the house. Then I waited, listening to the sound of the Little Boys' Fête that still pursued me, faint and thin like the music from a festival of the gnats, and thinking of the Musmée I had just bought and of her umbrella.

Mr. Initogo is my landlord. I live in his house, occupying a ground floor sitting room and a bedroom. Each month he presents me with a document which looks more like a Japanese poem than a bill; I hand him in return so many dollars, which, never counting and seeming utterly to disdain, he puts in the sleeve of his kimono. Then we smoke cigarettes and drink *saki*.

He was a coal merchant once, I believe, but he has long retired from business, and now, at the House of Crimson Shadows, up here beyond the fuss and worry of the town, he spends his days in poetical contemplation and the consumption of cigarettes and tea.

He writes poems about gnats and grasshoppers—four-lined productions that buzz and chirrup; he writes poems about chrysanthemums and cherry blossoms—eight-lined odes filled with the breath of autumn and the spring, and on the day of which I write he was engaged upon a poem of two hundred lines which had for subject "the dew of early morning seen upon the wistaria flowers in May."

I clapped my hands again. A shuffling and tinkling sound came in re-

sponse, a panel slid back and Plum Blossom, bearing the *hibachi*, framed herself in the open space.

Plum Blossom is scarcely sixty inches from the soles of her *tabis* to the tip of her glossy black camellia oil-scented head. She smells of verbena and moves with the noiselessness of a mouse.

I took my cigarette case from my pocket, lit a cigarette at the *hibachi* and smoked and gazed at the sunlit garden, a vista of bells and blossoms framed in the opening of the *shoji*.

On the path Mr. Initogo was promenading, an umbrella pictured with storks shading his head from the sun.

As I smoked and watched, my soul expanded. An extraordinary sensation possessed me. I felt light and large and luminous. I felt like a great and beautiful soap bubble on the surface of which Mr. Initogo, the garden and the sunlit veranda were reflected in prismatic colors; a bubble all mind, light as air, covered with beautiful pictures, inflated with ecstasy.

Tea!

Plum Blossom was kowtowing before me on the mat. She was pictured upon my surface crouching like a little panther before the outspread tea things.

She had brought in the *okimono*, the ivory Musm  e with the umbrella, which had just arrived from Danjuro's, unpacked it and placed it on the floor. Then she withdrew and I found myself with the *okimono*, alone.

Mr. Initogo was still promenading the garden. He and his blue kimono and his stork-painted sunshade still made prismatic pictures upon me, but I heeded him not. The voice of the Little Boys' F  te, faint and far away, had become articulate, and its voice was the voice of my thoughts as I rose and floated about the room, now approaching, now retreating from the *okimono*.

"You are a bubble," said the voice. "You are fated to burst on the top of that ivory umbrella. Beware of it!" Then I floated for safety's sake out into the garden.

Ah, that *haschish* cigarette! It held

in its rice paper cover more than one warning.

A soap bubble is the most beautiful thing in the whole world; if it were sentient, it would be the happiest.

Out in the garden a wind took me unsteadily toward Mr. Initogo. He saw me coming, and he fled—why, I could not imagine, for I did not feel in any way terrific; but his flight with his colored sunshade and blue kimono made a beautiful picture upon me, and I pursued him, to prolong the effect. Thrice round the little garden I followed him, and the third time, as I passed the opening in the *shoji*, some wind blew me into the room I had just left, and again I found myself alone with the *okimono*.

She stood there with her skirts caught up, simpering and tripping to some *f  te* beyond the ivory gates, and, like a moth about the flame of a candle, I circled around her.

The umbrella that had haunted my mind for weeks had now become the object of a furious desire and overmastering passion. Fragile almost as myself, it seemed my counterpart in beauty. To burst on it seemed the sum of a soap bubble's bliss; yet I held off and on, delaying the delicious moment, till, craning round the corner of the *shoji*, Mr. Initogo's frightened face precipitated the impending catastrophe.

She was worth a hundred and ten pounds, beautiful as a vision and fragile as a flower, all but the umbrella stem, which was a little spear of solid ivory.

And "Ah, but I told you to smoke in a garden!" was all I could get out of Danjuro, that dealer in dragons and dreams, coupled with the platitude that ivory Musm  es were not made to be sat upon.

That I know. And also that, according to Ali Akbar, *haschish* has for its worshiper one hundred and five dreams, of which the dream of essential lightness, the "soap bubble dream," is the best and most beautiful.

THE SONS OF SALOME

By EDNA S. VALENTINE

'T WAS the daughter of Herodias
With the lamps' gleam on her hair:
'Twas the daughter of Herodias—
And oh, but she was fair!

Before the court and the great lords there
She danced to the mad viol's swing,
And in the maze of her flying feet
She snared the heart of the King.

"Now will I give thee a kingly gift
For that thou hast pleased me.
Ay, look to the East and look to the West
And say what that gift shall be.

"Within or without the palace gates
Say what thou likest best;
For I have pledged the word of a king,
Fulfilled shall be thy behest."

She has looked to the East, she has looked to the West,
But still no answer came;
And over the crest of her panting breast
The blood surged up like flame.

She has looked beyond King Herod's throne,
And her heart scarce seemed to stir,
For out of her insolent-lidded eyes
Herodias sneered at her.

Adown the ranks of the men-at-arms,
Before the courtiers bold,
She bore the Baptist's bloody head
Aloft on a charger's gold.

The silken scarf about her hips,
Fringed a hand's breadth with blood—
She, bowing low before the King,
Swept a red cross where she stood.

And jest and murmur, frightened, died,
While the King stared moodily.
"For thy gift all thanks, O King," she cried,
And high and shrill laughed she.

THE SMART SET

Then red hate woke in the Baptist's eyes
 And the black lips breathed and spake—
 "On thine and thee to Eternity
 Hear now the doom I make:

"By land or sea no rest shall be
 For thee or the sons of thy race:
 By sea or land no kindly hand
 Shall lift against their disgrace.

"Theirs no foot-worn path to the fireside,
 No love that bringeth peace—
 They shall wander heart hungry and weary
 Till the panting centuries cease.

"Down the dust-gray ways of the wistful days
 For this sin that thou hast sinned,
 They shall wander forward and backward
 As a curtain is wisped by the wind—

"The desire of their hearts ungranted,
 The thirst of their souls unslaked—"
 He ceased, and in that silence
 The hearts of men shivered and quaked.

'Twas the daughter of Herodias,
 And the King gave her her will;
 And vainly seeking their hearts' desire,
 By wandering waters and strangers' fire,
 Her sons all wander still.



TO EYES AND LIPS!

By LOUISE WINTER

HERE'S to your eyes, sweetheart,
 Here's to your eyes!
 Many a man has lost his way,
 Many a good man's gone astray,
 Following, following, all the day—
 Some woman's eyes.

Here's to your lips, sweetheart,
 Here's to your lips!
 What if a man should die unshriven,
 Unrepentant and unforgiven,
 His dream of bliss is two links riven—
 Some woman's lips.

JACKSON'S WIFE

By VICTOR ROUSSEAU

WHEN Hale entered the dining room of the boarding house on Washington Square upon that first evening after his return he found it difficult to realize that he had been away at all, much less for fifteen months. As he walked automatically toward the table which he had formerly occupied he noticed that everything—almost everything—was exactly as it had been before. There was the fat Colonel, snorting over his soup; there was Miss Hallett, of the good heart and shrewish tongue, and Madame Oberhaus, placid, fat, smiling, beringed, unchanged.

Mrs. Crewe, the landlady, showed Hale to his old seat, and he sat down, instinctively shifting his chair in order to avoid the leg of the table which, fifteen months previously, had habitually annoyed him. The Colonel looked up, growled, snorted and wiped the soup from his mustache; Miss Hallett permitted her acidulous features to relax and Madame Oberhaus beamed all over her face.

"Welcome back, Hale," she said, stretching out her plump, bediamonded clean hand.

Hale scrutinized the diners. Those fifteen months seemed more than ever like a dream. All—almost all were known to him; and they sat in their accustomed places and interchanged the same banal platitudes. There were the same chairs and tables, the same, it almost appeared, fruit stains on the cloths; and Miles, the stately colored servitor, was handing Hale the *menu* as formerly.

"Where have you been all this time, Hale?" asked Madame Oberhaus.

"Oh, Europe," Hale answered vaguely. "Paris at first, then Florence and Rome. But I didn't do much painting—just drew in inspiration from the picture galleries."

"What is your craze now, Hale?"

"Madonnas," he answered. "I caught it in Florence, after looking at the Madonna by the unknown painter."

"The unknown? That sounds fascinating. Who was he? Tell me about him."

"Oh, it's only a guide's story," answered Hale carelessly. "After I'd been there a few times they got to know me and stopped pestering me, but there was one old fellow who wouldn't let up until I had hired him out of desperation. Most of his talk was the conventional guide's patter, and as full of inaccuracies; but this story he told me was new, though no doubt he invented it. It seems that there was a very beautiful woman who lived in Florence in the early Middle Ages, for whose love scores of men had killed themselves. According to him she was a sorceress, a kind of spiritual vampire. She had no soul, but when anyone kissed her she drew his soul through his lips, which gave her a new lease of life, while he, having no soul, promptly went off and committed suicide. This unknown artist was hopelessly in love with her, and when his love was rejected he begged as a last favor to be allowed to paint her, to which she consented. Then there was a cardinal whom she favored, of whom the painter was jealous. The story gets a little mixed up here; some say the two men killed one another in a duel, some that both committed

spicide. Anyway, it appears that the soul of the cardinal, who was presumably a man of good works, proved too strong for her, and so she died too."

"A kind of spiritual indigestion," said Miss Hallett.

"That legend of the *Belle Dame Sans Merci* runs through all medieval literature," said Madame Oberhaus. "But you don't require the vampire explanation. Death is incarnate in all beauty—everywhere."

"Why, what is your religion now, madame?" asked Hale, laughing. "Christian Science?"

"No, Maeterlinck," answered madame, respiteing a large morsel of chicken upon a fork, which was on its way to her mouth. "Last month it was Pragmatism. Before that I was a Jain."

"You haven't altered a bit," said Hale. "And I, too, have the most curious sensation, as though these fifteen months of my absence had been blotted out of my life and I had just come back from a day's jaunt in the country. Nothing seems to have changed at all."

"Nothing ever does change," said Madame Oberhaus. "You are like the child in the railroad carriage who thinks the scenery flies past him. Really it is standing still. You rush nither and thither, you 'make time fly'; and then some day you wake up and understand that it is you who fly. We go out of the door called 'Death' and come in at the gate called 'Birth' and see much the same scenery as before, and we go groping round blindly for old associations and acquaintances, not knowing them or our destiny. We are like blue flies buzzing under a small, inverted tumbler."

"What an unpleasant simile!" said Hale. "I think I liked you best when you were a Theosophist, madame. Your auras and haloes used to appeal to my sense of color. You always insisted that my halo was snow white, didn't you?"

"Death white," said Madame Ober-

haus. "You are a spiritual albino. But I believe in all that still. All my religions really amount to the same thing. Everything is true. It becomes true by thinking it's true—or perhaps that's a remnant of my Pragmatic days. But that's the beauty of it: when one understands the essential details one can have one's religion fresh every day, like rolls."

"Well, you're right in one respect: nothing seems to have changed here," said Hale, looking around the room once more. "I don't see a single face that is new to me. There's Bryant; and there's old Mr. Jones, getting red in the face over his soup; and there are Mrs. Burns and those two daughters she was always bothering me to paint. Oh, by the way, where's Jackson? I am to have his studio on the top floor next to the empty room that Mrs. Crewe used to occupy. I forgot Jackson had gone. I never thought he'd leave Washington Square, but I suppose he's grown rich and sold out in favor of Philistia."

Madame Oberhaus spread out her plump hands in deprecation. Miss Hallett's thin face lit up; she opened her mouth and closed it again irresolutely. The Colonel snorted and poured out some claret from his bottle.

"I can't imagine this place without Jackson," Hale went on. "He never used to miss a meal—and Bryant's sitting in his place, too. Isn't he coming back?"

"Jackson is dead, Hale," said Madame Oberhaus.

"Dead!" exclaimed Hale in astonishment. "Jackson dead? Why, he was the healthiest old bachelor going, the sort of fellow that never dies. It made one feel ten years younger to shake hands with him. Was it sudden?"

"It was last June," said Madame Oberhaus evasively. "He wasn't a bachelor; he had been married—"

"Two days," Miss Hallett interposed acidulously.

Their voices dropped, for a hush had fallen over the dining room. The conversation died; the clank of cutlery on

plates became more and more monotonous. Hale felt that somebody was coming in along the corridor behind him. She entered and went past.

She was small, slight and thin. Her hair was of a pale brown, strained back. Her eyes were gray. She was attired in black, and as she walked she bowed her head slightly forward, as though she had been broken once and must always go delicately.

"By George!" Hale muttered, white as the tablecloth. "Who's that?"

Madame Oberhaus paused in the act of conveying a tumbler to her lips. She had not turned her head.

"Hush!" she said. "That's Mrs. Jackson. Who did you think she was?"

"The—the Madonna in the gallery at Florence," stammered Hale in confusion. "What color is her aura?" he continued foolishly, not knowing why.

"Blood-colored," said Madame Oberhaus. "Her husband shot himself with Mrs. Crewe's revolver."

II

HALE went upstairs to his new room, once Jackson's, on the top story, overlooking the tumble-down Italian rookeries of Bleecker and Thompson Streets. It was a quaint, old-fashioned apartment, built, apparently, before the science of architecture had standardized its houses by dividing their spaces into parallelograms. In length it extended along the entire width of the house, and the low, sloping roof formed numerous eccentric angles with the irregular walls. Jackson had occupied it as a studio for several years. It was not meant for a living room; the bed and bureau had been relegated to an obscure corner adjacent to a single faucet, and hidden behind a screen, leaving a large and empty space of blue-washed walls and uncarpeted floor.

The boarding house, which stood on the south side of the Square, was one of a row of ancient and unprofitable tenements, whose rooms were leased unfurnished to impecunious painters, sculptors, modelers in clay, workers in

stained glass and the kindred arts and literary endeavorers. In sharp contrast to the squalor of the adjoining houses, it had been renovated by Mrs. Crewe, refurnished, and was conducted with a modicum of profit and tolerable enterprise.

The bed behind the screen was neatly made, but outside Hale was conscious that the dust lay thickly everywhere. Melancholy and desolation seemed to cling to the worm-eaten rafters, the creaking boards, the rattling window frame; the very atmosphere of the place was infected, as though by the mentality of the dead man who had once lived there. An old, charred pipe of Jackson's rested upon one corner of the mantel, the dust-white ashes still in the bowl and crumbling at its side. There were match scratches upon the walls, whose pale blue surface was disfigured by numerous indentations in the crumbling plaster.

Hale flung the window open and looked out. Over his left rose the high tower of the Judson, dominating the frowsy courtyards opposite, from which the wrangling voices of uncorseted Italian women, the squalling of infants and howls of chained and neglected dogs rose in a series of shrill crescendos, accompanied by the rumbling bass of the elevated trains rounding the curve out of Sixth Avenue. Four feet beneath him was the flat roof of an extension, which stretched toward the window of an apartment in the adjacent house, falling short of it by a space of two feet or thereabouts that formed an alley leading from the Square into a back courtyard.

As Hale stood there the window of the room in the house opposite was opened and a girl appeared. She wore a blue dress, which was partly concealed by a great, paint-stained apron. A brush was in her hand. She leaned forth, resting her arms upon the window sill. When she perceived Hale she started.

"Good evening, painter man!" she cried, waving the brush gaily. "So you've come home again!"

"That you, Blue Girl?" Hale called.

"Me, sure enough," she answered, poisoning herself in the window frame and swinging her feet unconcernedly over the alley beneath her. "Where have you been all this long time? I thought that you were never coming home again."

"Take care you don't fall down. I've been in Europe for the last year or so—Paris and Italy."

"Paris and Italy? My, but you must have been having a good time!" she mocked. "You didn't say good-bye to me before you went," she continued petulantly, wrinkling her eyebrows. "Your friend in there had to apologize until I forgave you. Really, you have been extremely rude to me. Mr. Jackson was ever so much nicer than you. And are you going to have his room and live here now?"

"Yes, for the present," said Hale abstractedly.

The girl ceased swinging her feet and looked over toward him curiously.

"You certainly are not nice any longer," she said emphatically. "Here I've been pent up in little New York this year and more while you've been traveling, thinking about the good times we three had together, and wondering whether you were ever going to return, and whether I should forgive you or not when you did return—and now you don't seem a bit pleased to see me, and I don't believe you'd care whether I forgave you or not. Would you? What are you painting now? I've gone back to still life. I'm coming over on to your roof like I used to. Look out!"

She poised herself as though for a spring.

"Take care," Hale cried. "Don't fall. I wouldn't try to get over; it's dangerous."

She stopped short as if struck, looking at him defiantly.

"Well," she said, "Europe certainly hasn't improved you. I wasn't coming; you needn't be so afraid of me. I think you're hateful. I don't want to see you any more or speak to you."

She leaped down backward inside her room and closed the window with a rattling slam. It had grown dark,

and with the brooding of twilight came renewed that sense of melancholy and fear. And all through that night Hale dreamed of Jackson, as he tossed and tumbled in his strange bed, unable to sleep. He saw him in a thousand guises, in quaint, medieval Florentine dress, pacing the room, pistol in hand. And he was always angry, and ever striving to hurry him along some secret corridors and dark, mysterious passages toward some unknown purpose.

III

SHE spoke to few people in the boarding house and was not popular; but she paid well for the two rooms she occupied on the second story, and Mrs. Crewe, smiling, parried the attacks of calumniators.

"There's something uncanny about her," Miss Hallett declaimed. "She gives me the creeps."

"She has an altar in her inside room," said Mrs. Burns. "The housemaid snooped in one day, and Mrs. Jackson slammed the door in her face. Mary was crying about it. She keeps the door locked night and day. There must be more in there than is supposed, or she wouldn't be ashamed to let anyone see—that's what I say. And the incense she burns! The other night I was as sure as anything the house was on fire. I could smell burning as plainly as I see you. So I put on a wrapper and went out to see, and what do you suppose it was but that disgusting stuff floating out in clouds!"

"I must say I dislike that priest she had to dinner last week," said Miss Hallett. "He walks so softly and is so sly and has such a sinister, creepy look. I've almost knocked into him on the stairs two or three times of an afternoon, just as it was growing dark. He makes me shudder, positively."

Hale had once met the priest outside her door, a meager, pale-faced man, in somber black, pursing his lips and pressing his thin finger tips together above the wooden crucifix which hung from his breast. He would have bid-

den him good afternoon, but the priest had passed him with a perfunctory, hurried gesture of salutation.

"I tell you one thing," Miss Hallett said, tossing her head, "that priest's in love with her. You can't fool me; I knew it the first minute I saw them sitting side by side at the table."

The Colonel looked up with a snort.

"Shows his good sense," he growled. "I'd be in love with her myself if I were twenty years younger and she had a little more meat on her bones."

"Horrible man!" said Madame Oberhaus playfully, tapping him on the knuckles with her dessert spoon.

"And what I say," Miss Hallett concluded, "is this, and I don't care who hears it: It isn't the thing for any man to spend hours at a time inside her room, and the door shut, priest or no priest. If she wants spiritual consolation she can get it in the drawing-room."

Hale pushed back his chair and walked abruptly from the table. The conversation disgusted him; the more so in that he knew this elderly spinster only voiced certain suspicions of his own which he had not ventured to put into thought even. He remembered how he had seen the priest's smooth hand—he detested smooth, white hands in men—laid for an instant carressingly upon Mrs. Jackson's shoulder as he passed up the stairs, and what an unreasoning jealousy the action had awakened in him. That evening he betook himself to Madame Oberhaus, determined to secure an introduction.

"But, Hale, it won't do you any good," she insisted, as they sat in the drawing-room. "She really does not care to form acquaintances; and besides, you really do not want to be introduced to her. You only imagine you do. It would be much better that you should not be. She goes her way and molests no one. Go yours. You are aware that you would be disappointed?"

"Of course; but I am prepared to be disappointed."

"Foolish painter! I have already told you that there is nothing in the

least mysterious about your Madonna; that her life is commonplace and eminently practical. That she goes to church on Sundays and puts something in the collection, reads novels infrequently, hates all advanced notions, such as divorce and women's enfranchisement, turns faint at the smell of tobacco smoke, leads a useful, sequestered life of little duties and practical interests, and is, withal, much broken up by Jackson's death and occupied with the consolations of her religion."

"That may be true," said Hale. "But if I discern in her that alluring quality which I saw in the Madonna at Florence, her replica, then it exists, so far as I am concerned. I believe that Da Vinci's *Gioconda* was a more commonplace personage in her everyday life; but that did not prevent the painter from immortalizing her in such a way that she has become the type of the Woman of Sorrows. I've got to search out this baffling, maddening quality, whatever the consequences may be, to analyze it, to label it, to be able to say, 'It is this,' and 'It is not this.'" He went on earnestly. "I must discover it or I shall lose my reason. I can't work, I can't think of anything but the realization of this intangible and elusive thing that is perplexing me."

"Ah, intangible!" said Madame Oberhaus. "That is the word, Hale. Because you are an artist you want the pot of gold under the rainbow and the bloom on the butterfly's wing. So you would fix the rainbow in the sky and hunt for the gold, and you would catch the butterfly in a net; and when you had succeeded you would find nothing. These things are not to be obtained in life. Haven't you really learned yet that when one catches the butterfly the color fades?"

"But I am ready to lose the color to catch the butterfly."

"Rather than have its inspiration? Think, Hale—suppose you should never speak to her. Well—you see her three times a day. She bends her head forward in walking, like that little angel of Botticelli you told me about. She

has a rapt air, like that woman of Raphael. These are perpetual joys to you, three times each day; and from the place where you sit you can watch her without staring, as you would look at a picture. And do you really mean to say you wish to destroy these things for the sake of finding out what they mean, like the child that takes a watch to pieces to find out why it ticks?"

"Yes, I do. As you say, they are not real, I know—"

"Pardon me, Hale, I didn't say that. They *are* real—they are the most real things in the world. They are so real that they transcend the perceptions of all but the few." She leaned forward and laid her plump, bediamonded hand upon his sleeve. "Hale," she continued earnestly, "people are not meant to meddle with such things. They are not for our poor, three-dimensional world at all. People who have them are like dynamite lying in a ditch, harmless only so long as it is not meddled with. Don't meddle with her. Jackson meddled, poor man. He hadn't your sensibility, but he had glimmerings; and he tried and tried and tried to understand her, and then—"

"He killed himself for that?" Hale asked hoarsely.

"Yes," answered Madame Oberhaus, nodding her head slowly. "I tried to warn him, as I am warning you, but he wouldn't listen to me. He tried to understand till he was nearly mad; then he took Mrs. Crewe's revolver out of the bureau drawer in her empty room and blew his head to pieces. Give it up, Hale."

He shook his head.

Someone was coming into the drawing-room. They rose up simultaneously.

"Mrs. Jackson," said Madame Oberhaus, "allow me to present to you Mr. Hale, our artist."

IV

"THE strength of the Catholic Church," said the priest thoughtfully, pressing his thin finger tips together,

"lies in her intimate comprehension of the imperfections of humanity. It is not in her doctrines, nor in that she forces upon our acceptance that which may be repugnant to common sense and credibility. Those burdens of doubt we leave to her, who bears them upon her shoulders. Her strength lies in the recognition of the elemental forces of evil, a devil real to each one of us, who must be combated. We know that human nature is too weak to fight him unassisted; and it is in our recognition of this that we have weathered the storms of nearly two thousand centuries—of Aristotelian skepticism and medieval scholasticism, of Janstenism, and of the so-called Reformation—just as we shall weather that of the speculative philosophy which you call Science today."

He was sitting in Hale's room toward the close of a wintry afternoon, apparently in no haste to brave the bluster of the blizzard that raged outside. Hale had encountered him unexpectedly as he was mounting the stairs. The priest was taking leave of his *protégée* at her door; he held her face between his hands and stroked her hair paternally. Of a sudden they had perceived him, and she started away, closing the door swiftly and leaving the two men face to face together alone.

With sudden determination the painter invited the priest up into his room, the latter accepting, evidently under some embarrassment and anxious to justify himself by his restored composure before departing. He had succeeded perfectly. The exchange of conversation, desultory at first, had become animated, and it was now Hale's turn to feel at a disadvantage in the presence of this bland, confident prelate.

"You mean that we are liable to obsession by these particular powers of which we speak?" he asked.

"I mean," the priest replied, "that the struggle with evil is a real warfare which is being waged unceasingly through life within the soul of each of us. Why, I myself, unfortified by my faith, would often fail to withstand

them. The powers of evil and good are so nicely balanced that only the utmost steadfastness and fortitude, coupled with the divine aid, can rescue man. Remember, for His inscrutable purposes, God has created Satan only a little less powerful than Himself, and man is only a little below the fallen angels. I know a soul," he went on musingly, "that has been peculiarly tried; yet, steadfast in faith and never wavering, she has endured the utmost of affliction in resignation."

Hale knew of whom his companion was speaking. He knew, too, that the priest knew that he knew.

"She is a woman of the most noble nature," the priest continued, with something of unctitude. "She married as a mere girl and lost her husband by accident on the morning after the ceremony. Seven years later she married for the second time. Again her hopes and life were blighted by a horrible catastrophe. Her husband killed himself—"

"She was already a widow when Jackson married her?" cried Hale in horror.

He stopped and blushed hotly, conscious that he had betrayed himself. The priest waved his interjection aside.

"Contrary to what one might expect," he continued, not heeding the interruption, "this only softened her. She is one of those souls who belong naturally to God. Her suffering drove her back into the seclusion offered by the Church to all such natures, from which she ought never to have emerged. Thenceforward she shunned all men. Ultimately I hope to be able to induce her to take the veil."

Was it a threat or a warning? Hale's anger rose.

"At least, she may consider that carefully when her grief subsides," he answered. "It is the world, with all its beauty, and not the cloister, that she requires."

"I think not," said the priest, smiling softly. "Well, the storm seems to have stopped, and I must be on my way." He went out with his soft,

stealthy tread, leaving Hale sitting alone, musing and pondering.

Why had the priest uttered his subtly conveyed, but unmistakable warning? Why, too, had he undertaken to save this stranger from the priest's designs—he, who knew nothing of either? Some force seemed to control and urge him along unknown paths to ungessed purposes.

In no wise had his introduction aided him. He had asked for permission to call on her and had been refused. She was at home to none except her spiritual adviser, she told him. She did not care to entertain callers so soon after her husband's death. Her life was broken. And the door of her room closed relentlessly behind her.

Thus he could obtain only chance, fragmentary conversations with her upon the stairs, in the hall, at the front door, whenever they met by accident.

Sometimes, conscious of the silent scrutiny of Madame Oberhaus, he thrust the thought of her away for a few hours. But he could paint no longer; and always, three times a day, after the horrible jangle of the loud bell had drawn the boarders into the dining room, he saw her facing him across the table adjacent, silent, with bowed head and piteous, Madonna's face.

She haunted him and held him, as though invisible, fine chains restrained him. It was about this time that his dreams of Jackson took more coherent form; and he began to feel in some dim fashion as though he were an actor in some portentous tragedy that was being renewed each night among three players—himself, the woman and the dead man.

It was always Jackson who played the leading part in these long, drawn-out pieces, from which he awoke with a parched throat and burning fever. He came, convulsed with jealousy and hatred for the sake of the woman whom his incorporeal substance could not possess. And Hale would awake with pulses madly throbbing and outstretched arms, to find himself upon his feet somewhere, at door or window, as though about to set out for some

mysterious regions upon some unknown errand.

Upon one thing he was resolved: he would fight the priest on his own ground. He would allow no threats to scare him away. So he asked Mrs. Jackson's permission to paint her, pleading his cause and art manfully.

"Mr. Hale, you are so persistent," she replied petulantly. "One does not—no self-respecting woman could entertain company so soon after such an affliction as mine." Tears came into her eyes. "Besides, in my position it wouldn't be altogether the thing; and Mrs. Crewe would talk—perhaps ask me to leave. I have been so contented here—" She withdrew, leaving him baffled and conscious of a sensation of final, utter defeat.

To his astonishment she came to him of her volition on the following day.

"Mr. Hale," she began, "I have been speaking to Father Darragh, and he has advised me to accede to your request. He thinks it might be good for me, some little relaxation from the monotony of my life." She smiled at him for the first time, and Hale felt his pulses leap. "I will give you an hour each day—each afternoon."

Hale grasped at the opportunity eagerly, conscious, however, of a strange perplexity. What could be the motive of the priest in thus granting him as a gift what he had contended for unsuccessfully, in yielding to him after he had already beaten him? Was it in scorn, to demonstrate the security of the clutch with which he held his victim?

V

SHE was expecting him on the following afternoon, when he carried his easel into her apartment. Hale looked around; it was his conceit to gather something of his sitters' mentality through the medium of their environments. The room was furnished plainly, though certain feminine adornments, in the way of cushions and draperies, were not absent. Upon the

shelves were a few books, in the main of a devotional nature. An enlarged photograph of Jackson hung from a wall. The *ensemble* was drearily conventional.

The door which led to her inner room was locked; he could see the tongue clinched into its frame of steel.

"Sit so," he said, placing her against a background of drapery. He knew instinctively the attitude which he desired: how the head must be bowed, the shoulders stooping, the hands folded. Of a sudden the explanation dawned on him. He wished her in the pose of the Madonna of the unknown painter.

That was the first of several sittings. Under his brush the picture grew into life unsurpassed by that of his imagination. He felt the creative ardor consume him with so intense a flame that the sheer ecstasy swept all doubts and troubles aside. She was his! He loved her! He could communicate to her that divine spark of passion that should win her from her morbid, secluded fancies and cloistral meditations, from the narrow sway of the priest into the broad, free sunshine of love. Beneath that spell that hovered round them her own insensibility seemed to relax. It seemed as though her heart, frozen so long, were about to yield up its treasured secret to him. He cast his brush suddenly down and caught her by the hands.

"I want to understand you," he blurted out. "Tell me your secret." They had joined issue at last; and they stared into each other's faces. Hale was aware of the presence of some intense and overpowering emotion. He bent toward her, seeing only her eyes, like stars, and the redness of her mouth. Another moment—and her face froze, her eyes widened in fear and she looked fearfully over her shoulder behind him. Hale turned. The priest was standing in the doorway.

"Go!" she said, pointing into the passage. The spell had snapped; she was imperious in her resentment. On the priest's features was an expression of triumphant scorn.

Hale picked up his easel and went out wearily.

An hour later he was seated before the easel in his own room. He was not conscious how he had gone there; he had known nothing of the lapse of time. It was a soft voice that roused him from his meditation. Two arms were laid on the window sill and a face looked in over them.

"May I look in?" the Blue Girl called.

He started up in confusion, turning on her a look of distress, profound and abysmal.

"I've been watching you from my window for the last three-quarters of an hour," said the Blue Girl. "I called to you twice, but you didn't seem to hear me. So I made the jump you told me not to make and came over to your roof to see if I could help you and to find out what you were painting."

He did not answer, but gazed at her irresolutely, piecing together the disordered fragments of his thoughts.

"I'm sorry I was so hateful to you the other evening," said the Blue Girl remorsefully, picking at her paint-stained apron. "But I'm desperately sorry now." She cast a glance at the easel. "O-oh!" she cried, clutching at the window sill.

He glanced involuntarily at the picture. There she was, the heavenly Madonna of the gallery of Florence, glowing in her beauty and youth, bearing in her eyes the immortal secret that wrung the hearts of men.

"What is it?" he muttered.

"Who is she?" cried the girl. "Who is she?"

Hale laughed.

"Who is she?" he asked. "I'll tell you, Blue Girl. She stands for the type of eternal goodness and loveliness. She is the embodiment of all in women that is noble and pure. She appears upon this earth rarely, from century to century, to portray that divine light of the soul that shines like a lamp through the flesh. But why she is this, or how it is that she wrings the sinews of the heart in agony and ecstasy and worship, Blue Girl, I can't tell you."

She stared at Hale in terror. Her

lips were parted; the breath came heavily between them.

"Lovely and beautiful, did you say?" she cried. "Oh, painter, what have you created? What has possessed you? Don't you see that she is devilish? I cannot look at her; she frightens me."

"What?" he cried.

"Can you not see what you have made? It is a fiend, a lost soul that knows its own intolerable, eternal woe. And you think it divine?"

She turned her quiet blue eyes upon his own in mute appeal. He gazed for one moment into their placid depths, then turned his own upon the picture. And for one instant, briefly, but certainly, something seemed to be rolled away from him before his sight, as one rolls up a curtain. Then an odd fancy came to him. He thought that the pictured face took on the semblance of a skull; through the thin features he could trace the outlines of the bones, and the rictus that widened under the fleshless cheeks into the hollows of the jaws. Suddenly the secret was made clear to him. This piteous Madonna guise, this flowerlike face, was but the mask and the lure of death, that gate toward which converged all avenues of life. It was that death incarnate in all beauty, everywhere, as Madame Oberhaus had said.

He dropped heavily into a chair. He passed his hand over his brow. And then, glancing once more toward his picture, he saw her again, the Madonna of the unknown painter in all her matchless loveliness.

The Blue Girl's lips tightened at the corners. She clasped her hands. There was infinite pain in her blue eyes, in the slow, sorrowful cadence of her voice.

"Oh, if I could help you!" she said brokenly. "How could you have created such a dreadful thing, painter man? I know her and I know you are in love with her. It isn't that I care; don't think I care. But she's not good, or else you couldn't have painted her in such a way as that. How could you paint and love such a thing, when every line of it is evil? And there are

others—" She checked herself and stretched one arm through the window frame. Hale rose and took her hand in his.

"I know that this is good-bye," she said quietly. "I can't come here any more or call on you as I used to. It isn't that that's making me cry. But you're in trouble—I've seen that for a long time, ever since you came back—and I can't help you. But I will help you, when you most need it, painter. That picture means terrible things to happen to you, and when they come think of me for a minute, and my thoughts will go out to you and I shall help you, and perhaps save you."

Hale felt a shadow behind him. The girl freed herself with a little cry and disappeared. Hale turned. The priest was standing behind him.

"That girl loves you," said the priest quietly.

"What business is that of yours?" demanded Hale fiercely. "You stand too much upon the rights of your cloth, it seems to me. That last occasion was sufficient for my self-restraint; this goes beyond it."

"That girl loves you," the priest repeated, eying Hale steadily. "Are you blind that you should spurn it and rush to your ruin?"

"Ruin?" sneered Hale contemptuously.

"Ruin," the priest repeated. "I tell you," he went on with rising tones, "I tell you that the woman you seek is not for you, can never be for you. Will you men never take warning?"

"I thought at first you wanted to get her into a nunnery," replied Hale with dangerous calmness. "But now I am tempted to believe that you are in love with her yourself."

To his astonishment the priest showed no resentment. He sank down heavily into a chair and bowed his head silently upon his breast. Shame and humiliation showed on his face.

"I am," he replied simply after a while, looking up at Hale calmly. "Yes, I have loved her ever since I have known her. But I call Christ to witness that I have fought this passion un-

ceasingly, night and day, year after year, stifling it, throttling it, conquering it, by the divine aid. If it were not for that, God knows it would have mastered me long since. I love her, Mr. Hale.

"And if I did not love her I should never have come to you, to make this confession of my own weakness and to appeal to all that is best in you. I hardly know how I am to speak. You have misunderstood me, thought me an enemy, an interloper, when all the while, by all that I hold sacred, my thoughts have been for her alone. If I were to attempt to tell you of what we priests have seen, know beyond a doubt, of the immanence of evil, of the terrific forces of evil that move and have their being in and around us, you would set me down as a madman.

"I will say this only, that I am fighting for her soul. You cannot dream of her predicament. I have fought for her daily, from year to year, gaining, losing, gaining, losing, yet never faltering, conscious of the never failing assistance of my Divine Master. And you," he went on bitterly, "you think of yourself alone, your love, your happiness.

"I let you paint her, rather than seem to her too meticulous in my guardianship. What did you do? What would you have done if by the aid of Providence I had not entered at that moment? You would have snared her soul in human bondage once more and turned her from the Church. Nor would it have helped you. Do you suppose the Powers of Evil would have been tolerant of you—that you would have fared better than Jackson fared?

"You think it love that you feel. It is not love. It is a devil's snare. Your love means death to you, and death to her own soul. That girl loves you. Go to her, Mr. Hale, in her kindness and purity and goodness, and don't try for what you can never attain."

The sun had sunk; one star was shining in the sky. Hale turned. Against the darkening east the deathless beauty of the Madonna's face flamed like a fire. He turned on the priest furiously.

"Curse you and your windy words!"

he cried, not knowing what speech poured from his lips. "I'll have no interference. Fight your own battles, but don't come whining to me to help you disgrace the uniform you are wearing."

The priest rose.

"I'll save you yet, in spite of yourself," he answered. He bowed coldly and went softly out of the room. Hale sank into a chair. Night came. The hours were tolled from the town clocks. He did not move.

VI

Was it indeed death, this secret? And must he pass through that door before he could attain its mystery and understand? Better death, then, than this unquenchable desire that ran like ichor through his veins.

He knew that he was asleep. It seemed he stood in the void, striving to reach her through some maze of passages whose secret he had forgotten. And Jackson came to him, but furious no longer. There was a hopeless sadness in his eyes. He took him by the hand and led him, but cautiously, lest he should awake.

Pale faces glared at them as they passed by—the faces of her dead lovers. "Join us. Be one with us," they seemed to say. There were the dukes and lords of ancient Italy, and the cardinal, in his Papal uniform, with the face of the priest. And there, a little apart from the others, was a beautiful boy's face, the eyes closed in death, a gaping wound in the temple—the face of the unknown painter—*his* face!

Then they passed on for centuries, down dim stairways and secret passages till they came to a half-open door. There he saw her at last, his Madonna. The old fire leaped into her eyes; she stretched her arms toward him. He leaned forward.

Then, like a clear bell, something rang through the darkness. It was the Blue Girl's voice.

He awoke with a shock, his heart hammering in his breast heavily. He

was upon his feet and fumbling in a bureau drawer. He was in Mrs. Crewe's empty room, and the pale moonlight that filtered through the window fell upon something in his clenched hand—something heavy and cold, of shining steel.

He dashed it to the floor and ran downstairs, heavy with sleep, his heart leaping with some intolerable fear. Her outer door was ajar; she was not in her room. He entered and stood reeling like a drunken man, helpless, spurred on by something inexplicable that seemed to direct his footsteps. Then for the first time he saw that the door of her inner room stood open. He entered.

He saw nothing but the altar of her devotions. The rest of the apartment was in darkness, but the light of six candles of wax illumined the figure of the saint and the great crucifix that hung over it. There was something peculiar about the crucifix. Hale looked more closely. It was upside down. And the saint—was this the object of her devotion, this horned and leering figure behind the candles?

Then in a flash he knew. He had once been inside one of those places in Paris where atheists, in mockery of God, celebrated their devil worship in sickening jest. But this was real; this was no jest, this costly altar, these candles, these evidences of worship about and around him. A horror came over him; he shook; his knees trembled, and in physical nausea he turned to fly.

But he stood rooted to the place, for through the outer door the woman came, the priest close on her heels. They stood upon the mat, arguing—she pleading, the priest in expostulation.

"I tell you," Hale heard her murmur, "it is no use. You cannot save me. I have struggled too long. For a little ease, a little happiness, a little of that peace which other women have, I have prayed, I have wept, I have fasted. Now I am tired to death of it."

Hale heard the priest's murmured expostulations. He could not distinguish the words, but he seemed to plead,

eloquently at first, then brokenly. Cautiously he crept to the door. He saw the priest stand as though hypnotized; he saw his hand fumble with helpless effort at the wooden crucifix that hung from his breast; he saw him subside, motionless now, his face transfigured with ecstasy. And upon hers was the light that was upon the face of the Florentine Madonna.

"Come," Hale heard her murmur. "Come, and I will show you why your prayers are unavailing. I have found a sweeter God than yours. For too long a time I have struggled against Him, and He has punished me."

She took him by the hand and led him toward the inner door. Hale drew back hastily into the darkness. His feet shuffled upon the floor, but neither heard him. They stopped before the altar.

"Here is my God," she said, bending her gaze on her companion's face.

A look of mortal agony and anguish transfigured the features of the priest. He struggled to cry out, to move. Three times he lifted his arm, and three times it fell back to his side helplessly. The woman stretched out her arms. Slowly the priest drew near—he bent his head and pressed his lips to hers.

Then the spell snapped. She raised her head and laughed, clearly and loud. Was it imagination, or even in that brief moment's space did her thin form expand, new life blood flood her pale lips and cheeks and brows?

The priest spun around, staggering drunkenly, clutching at his head. Then, with a groan that seemed to rend his being, he swung out his arm and dashed the candles from their sconces with one blow, so that they sputtered and hissed on the soft carpet and the illuminated face of the saint suddenly went out. And, breathing heavily, he stumbled out of the room.

Hale sprang from his concealment and followed him, caught him, plucked at his sleeve. But the priest shook him away, possessed by an almost superhuman power, and went on to the ground floor, Hale following, as though in a dream. At the street door he

seemed to hesitate for an instant; then he opened it and went out.

It had been snowing and the ground was white with the fast falling flakes. They went on side by side through the maze of alleys that lead through the Italian quarter toward Bleecker Street. At the street corner the priest stopped for a moment, tore from his waist the wooden crucifix and snapped it in two. He threw the pieces into the snow.

"There is no God," he muttered as he strode away.

He repeated these words over and over in reverie. Hale kept at his side, catching at his arm often, but vainly. He might not have been there for all that his companion knew. In this manner they passed into Bleecker Street. The rumble of trains on the elevated railway now became audible. As they reached the Bleecker Street station the priest turned, and, with slow deliberation, began to ascend the stairs. He dropped a ticket into the box and moved to the platform on the downtown side. Hale halted one instant to purchase a ticket from the sleepy attendant and hurried after his companion to where a southbound train was approaching, sweeping away the snow before it in white clouds.

Then suddenly, as though impelled by some invisible power, with a convulsive movement the priest sprang upon the metal road, directly in front of the approaching train. The motor-man saw him and pulled frantically at his lever. It was too late. As Hale stood on the platform, paralyzed with horror, he saw the great bulk of the monster reared aloft, saw it bear down upon the black garmented body in its path, saw it catch it up, play with it, tear it and hurl it away, a crumpled, tumbled, lifeless heap of inert flesh and shreds of clothing, dabbled and stained.

Hale turned. A gleam of light shot upward into the sky before him.

.VII

HE never knew how he got home. For at the very moment when the

train dashed the life out of its plaything his spell fell from him, the old glamor of evil died and in his heart rose up a passionate love and worship for the Blue Girl with her pure heart and quiet eyes. And the next moment he was dashing down the elevated platform and down the steps and through the snow homeward.

As he ran he saw flames shoot into the sky, sending out showers of sparks, roaring, engulfing the upper stories of the old house on the Square. He ran on desperately, with labored breath and desperate fear. Now he had reached the place. They caught at him and tried to restrain him. but he shook them away.

"They are all safe," they cried. "All but one, and she was dead when the firemen reached her. You cannot save her."

But it was not of her he thought.

Into the house, up the stairs, through the hot flames and stifling smoke he ran, up steps that crumbled under him and along passages that crashed down beneath his feet. Now he had reached the top story and the fire fanned him with its burning breath. He broke into his room—one moment's respite before the flames reached it. He shattered the window with one blow.

"Blue Girl!" he called with sickening fear.

But the house was safe; the menace was not there. The wind, which blew from the west, had turned the path of the conflagration.

"Blue Girl!" he called again.

He heard her voice; he saw her arms stretched out; he saw her face before him over the roofs.

"Come!" she said, placing her hands in his.



WHEN YOU GO AWAY

By REGINALD WRIGHT KAUFFMAN

I SOMETIMES think that, when you go away,
Though I am blinded by my love and fear,
So very much are you the world to me
That I shall ever, somehow, keep you near.

Though miles dis sever and though years divide,
My questing heart shall find you everywhere:
In every night the starlight of your eyes,
In every dawn the sunshine of your hair.

As all things that are beautiful and good
Must ever be a vital part of you,
So all good things and beautiful must hold
Your memory made mercifully true.

For them that love there is nor time nor space;
And I shall see, in Love's lore learned and wise,
In every dawn the sunshine of your hair,
In every night the starlight of your eyes.

THE PROFESSOR SMILES

By E. E. MOISE

"BILLY, that quadrangular 'Man and Superman' is now a common three-leaf clover."

Miss Charlotte Bogardus sank her corpulent person in a rattan armchair and fanned herself with her elbow up in the air.

William Benjamin Bogardus, M.A., B.S., LL.D., Ph.D., pushed the spectacles from the bridge of his delicate-strong nose to the silky, smooth, white hair of his delicate-large head and surveyed his sister with half-impatient scrutiny.

"My dear Chaddy," he submitted, in suppressed irritation, "if you must interrupt my reading, kindly do so in clear phraseology. Your mixed metaphors are not lucid."

"Very well. But I wish your atavism had made you more of a social animal and less of an intellect. You never—"

"Less criticism, Chaddy. Your elucida—"

"Lucile Vrenken, Judith Barnol and Letty Vincent have been laying snares for Henry March ever since he bought the First National Bank," said Miss Bogardus, with distinct articulation of the syllables and some acerbity. "Lucile wants his social position; Judith wants his money. Letty wanted him; and now Letty has given up. It's too terrible, after all Mrs. Allison and I have done for her."

"But do they love the man?"

"I'm not sure about Lucile and Judith, but Letty does. She—"

"Then, my dear, how do you know she has withdrawn?"

"Oh, Billy, if she cared to outshine

Lucile and Judith she would never have brought that little five-year-old Robert up here. And she spends all her time with the child."

"Why not? Our niece loves children, her brother's children especially. I have observed it. Perhaps Mr. March—"

"You're an ignorant, cold-blooded brute," declared Miss Bogardus in acidulous accents.

"My dear Chaddy," rejoined the Professor, returning the spectacles to his humorously twinkling gray eyes. "I know I am ignorant, and perhaps I am brutal, but what can I do for you in such an affair? Though Kant made light of the objective reality of time, I believe in this case time will tell. I have noticed Letitia usually succeeds in what she undertakes. Perhaps—"

"You make me tired," Miss Bogardus exploded. And when she sat down inside with the hostess, Mrs. Allison, she said: "I do wish Billy's social instincts ran more to people and less to sociology. He's almost human when he likes to be."

"I think he's an old dear," replied Mrs. Allison. "My husband is getting quite jealous of him."

The Professor was about to resume his book, when suddenly the lines of amusement, the little parentheses, deepened at the corners of his thin lips. Letitia Vincent was coming across the lawn with a little boy. He was big for his small age, fair of hair and white with a healthy whiteness, and pink with the blood of a healthy body. She was of medium height and not quite slender; her fine, sensitive features

were purely feminine, with a delicate-keen femininity; her hair shimmered a blur of brownish gold.

"What vigor—what verve—what sex!" mused the Professor.

"Where have you been?" he asked aloud.

"Playin' blind-man-buff wif Henry," replied the youngster.

"Say 'Mr. March,' Bobby," corrected Letitia.

"Mr. March," said Bobby obediently.

"Mr. March was on his way to the village and stopped a moment to play with Bobby," Letitia explained indifferently as she hurried the child indoors.

The flickering cattails of a smile played around Professor Bogardus's thin lips. He had adjusted the spectacles and taken up the book, when three heads above the hedge attracted his attention. With the searching eye of cold analysis he watched three people coming across the lawn.

Henry March, whom he had despised as a student but admired as a man of some force of character, was escorting Lucile and Judith from the golf links. He was not handsome; he was big and powerful and intelligent looking. His face was kindly; it did not seem as though he were engaged in crushing hope from the lives of factory people. If his diamond ring were the crystalized tears of working women, he was not perceptibly conscious of it. He was laughing, a big, robust laugh; but the Professor caught a glint of anxiety in his eye. The Professor smiled.

Lucile Vrenken took the chair by Professor Bogardus, leaving March and Judith Barnol talking on the lawn. She was cheerful, but, to the Professor, not exactly pleased. Her intellectual brow grew slightly drawn as she shot a side glance at the couple loitering in amiable conversation.

"How long has Mr. March been on the links?" asked the Professor, attempting an air of listlessness.

"All the morning, except for an hour he spent in the village sending telegrams. Why do you ask, Professor?"

"Oh, just banal curiosity. He must be a busy man."

"Yes. He goes to the telegraph office two or three times a day. He dictates letters to a lawyer's stenographer in the village."

The Professor interested Lucile Vrenken; she felt always he never meant exactly what he said.

The Professor smiled at the couple nearing the steps to the porch; his lips amused, his eyes studying.

"Why are you so interested—and so suddenly?"

"Why does he not go back to his business?"

"He told us this morning a well-organized corporation can run for months without its chief and benefit by developing executive ability in the vice-presidents."

Professor Bogardus turned and laughed strangely right in Miss Lucile Felicia Van Vrenken's aristocratic face; a soft, low, rippling exuberance of the risibilities that made her laugh, without understanding, in contagious sympathy. Something the Professor was about to say hovered a moment and died unexpressed. Just then the crowd poured in over the lawn, for in a half-hour dinner would be served. Judith Barnol, a superbly formed woman in full golf regalia, gave Lucile Vrenken an indescribably triumphant sweep of the eyes as the wave of Mrs. Allison's guests carried her through the door. Lucile Vrenken, swishing her skirts petulantly, followed the crowd. The Professor beckoned to March.

"Mr. March," he queried, peering quizzically, "you were an only child, were you not?"

March started in mild astonishment.

"Yes."

"You were reared alone?"

"Yes."

"Never lived in a household of children?"

"You once gave me an examination, Professor. Now it's a cross examination. Where's the point?"

"A purely scientific and impersonal inquiry. You have not seen much of children?"

"Only this past year. I have a widowed cousin and her three little tots at home. But where's the point? I—"

He stopped. The Professor was smiling a smile of critical curves; a smile that seemed to have some deep personal intent not at all scientific. The Professor's gray eyes were dancing lightly behind the big lenses. March's heart halted for a moment dead still; then it tingled; then it flew off, racing perilously.

"You old duffer!" he exclaimed. "You old duffer!" and he seized the Professor's delicate-thin hands and shook them. "How did you know it?"

"Imagination, Mr. March, imagination. It is a word which scientists avoid because of its ultra-scientific connotations, but without it we would know nothing. The scientific use of the imagination—"

"Imagination—scientific—Bosh! Did that kid catch on to anything?"

"The psychologic processes—"

"Professor, if you'll keep mum till this house party's over, I'll graft on our crowd for enough to build you a new laboratory."

"We need it, Mr. March, we need it badly."

His long, delicate-light frame shook gently with half suppressed merriment.

As March went slowly in, smiling and

quite pleased with himself and the world in general, Miss Charlotte Bogardus came charging out, frowning and quite displeased with somebody and the world in general.

"Billy," she snapped severely, "dinner is nearly ready. Go up and shave yourself."

"One moment, my dear. In the normal man of full development, the yearning for fatherhood often—"

"Fatherhood! You ridiculous old emotionless iceberg! What do you know about fatherhood?"

"Nothing at all, my dear, nothing at all," he protested, the lines of amusement, the parentheses, widening from the corners of his thin lips. "I know nothing of fatherhood, as you say, but for some years I have observed scientifically the influence of the philoprogenitive instinct. I have today—Very well, my dear, I will go shave myself."

And as the Professor passed the razor under his clear-cut, delicate-strong jaw, a smile of subtle pleasure illumined his lean face. His humorous gray eyes twinkled most merrily. Of course, you could not have seen the smile on account of the suds, but if you had seen his eyes you might have smiled yourself. Perhaps you would have laughed.



A DAY OF DAYS

By MARY MINOR LEWIS

IF I could choose from out the bygone years

One day, the happiest of all days yet spent—

One day, which, had I only one to live,
I would live o'er again and be content—

Which would I name?

Although estranged we are, and though long years
Have passed since then,
Such memories cannot die.

If you could choose one day as I now do,
I know full well, dear heart, that you and I
Would choose the same.

FIRST AID TO THE LITERARY

By JOHN KENDRICK BANGS

FIRST be sure you write, then go ahead! The first symptom by which you may ascertain whether you write or not will manifest itself in a burning sense of indignation with which you read the stories by other people that are published in the magazines. If, as you read these, you find yourself saying, "Tush! What rot! I could do better myself with both hands tied behind my back!" or registering an inward protest not unmingled with profane speech because the particular story you have been reading ends differently from the way you would have ended it yourself; and if later you find yourself tossing wildly about upon your cot during a sleepless night, fairly itching to take your pen in hand to scribble out the surging thoughts with which your brain is teeming; and, surest of all, if it makes you inordinately jealous every time you see some popular author's name in print, then you may assure yourself that the little *scribendi* germ has got into your system, and that if you do not wish to come down with an acute attack of scribberitis the sooner you get it out the better. The only cure for the *cacoëthes scribendi* is to write. It has been well said by one of our most eminent authors, whose name modesty forbids my mentioning at this time, that no man ever learns that he cannot write until he has tried it. *The scratch of the pen is the only cure for the writer's itch.* Wherefore, hasten! Acquire the necessary tools and begin.

EQUIPMENT

The necessary tools of a well-equipped *littérateur*, thanks to the great advances in the art or science of writing since the primitive days of authors like

Moses, Dickens, Thackeray, George Eliot and other archaic strugglers in the seas of literature, have gone through a process of elimination which has greatly simplified the processes of production, and in our day and generation we find that the person who thirsts for literary fame, instead of being confronted with the necessity of providing himself with an elaborate outfit, may now reasonably hope to win the laurel by the expert manipulation of pens, pads, envelopes and postage stamps. Of these, possibly the most important is the postage stamp. For the beginner in letters these little gummed governmental engravings are absolutely essential to success. Without them you can not only not get your work before the editor, but your effort will be entirely thrown away—provided the editor does not want it. *Parsimony in postage breeds fat waste baskets.* I advise that you write that epigram in your notebooks, and as a corollary to it you may add that *the waste basket feedeth the furnaces of Literary Oblivion.*

As to the amount of your investment in this respect, no beginner in literature should venture an embarkation upon the perilous seas of authorship without first having capitalized himself on a basis of *four dollars' worth of stamps per story.* There are at least fifty magazines in this country today that buy short stories, and experience has taught us that the postage on the average manuscript in this class of literature amounts to four cents to, and four cents back, or eight cents in all for each round trip that your manuscript takes in the effort to find its final resting place. Fifty round trips of this nature, it will be seen by any beginner versed in the rudiments of the multiplication table, will come to the precise figure men-

tioned above—four dollars. This may be set down with assurance as the minimum of expense of authorship in the short story line. This provided for fame can be won with no other expenditure, but it will require some management. For instance, if you do not feel that you can afford to provide yourself with the other tools mentioned above, pen, ink and paper—including envelopes—these can be had free, and free desk room obtained as well, with heat and light thrown in, in the writing rooms of almost any of the generously conducted New York hotels, provided, of course, that you are presentably dressed, and have the necessary assurance to avail yourself of the opportunities they afford you without arousing suspicion.

For example, you can go into the Manhastoria at almost any hour of the day or night and, if you do it without undue ostentation, sit down in the writing room and make free and liberal use of the hotel stationery, without subjecting yourself to annoying interruptions or embarrassing questions by the hotel attendants. So many persons do this for social purposes these days that it has become almost a right vested in that portion of the public that can afford to dress appropriately. You should remember, however, to avoid a too persistent appearance at any one hostelry. The method that has been found to contribute most assuredly to the comfort of writers adopting this plan of economy is to set apart one or two hours each day for their writing, and to choose a different hotel for each period of literary incubation. You might make, as a means of emphasizing this point in your minds, a note of the following schedule adopted by a leading member of what is vulgarly known as the Sponge School of Fiction:

Monday.....	10-12 A.M.	The Manhastoria.
Tuesday.....	9-11 A.M.	Hotel Wilhelmina.
Wednesday..	4-6 P.M.	Hotel de Subway.
Thursday....	3-5 P.M.	Hotel Powhatan.
Friday.....	Any time	Hotel Grand
		Abattoir.
Saturday....	11 A.M.-1 P.M.	The Gazzaza.

The Gazzaza is placed last for the reason that, under prevailing social

conditions, it is probably the best place in town to mail your manuscript from, and the chances are that if you are industrious the work begun on Monday will be ready for the post by Saturday. In any event, you will do well to mail your story in a Gazzaza envelope in order that it may have a chance of securing a more immediate reading, which it will surely have, especially if you address it in such a way as to make it look like an invitation to dinner. English students reading these comments will find the suggestion herein made equally applicable to their own needs, but they must, of course, substitute the names of British hotels for the American establishments set forth in the above schedule. As a minor detail, we would say that in London the Hotel Weasel has the best quality of stationery, but that in use at the Royal Holstein or the Cosmopole is equally impressive, and being somewhat lighter in quality runs more sheets to the ounce than the other, which may be an advantage when the cost of the postage is taken into consideration.

SUBJECT MATTER

Matter of equipment thus provided for, we come now to a consideration of the subject matter from which your stories shall be constructed. It is, of course, impossible to cover in a lecture of the length, breadth and general thickness of this, so wide a field as the short story presents in the matter of topics to be treated. For beginners, however, certain generalizations can be made, which will serve their purposes almost as well, if, indeed, not quite as thoroughly, as an exhaustive treatise written at five cents a word by a professional wordmonger.

Speaking generally, then, it will be well if, before starting in to write his story, the beginner have some sort of an idea of what he proposes to write about—at least, something remotely resembling an idea. In spite of the vast number of stories that are printed from month to month seeming to prove the contrary, editors as a class have a

predilection for ideas, and, if they possibly can, will give preference to a story with one over a story that is entirely devoid of anything of the kind. The fact that they sometimes, nay with an amazing frequency, print stories which are innocent of purpose, trend or thought, is not that they like that sort of thing, but because the hour of going to press is as inevitable as death and taxes, of regular, constant, periodic recurrence; and something had to be printed, else our magazines would speedily degenerate into mere blank books. With fifty magazines printing on an average of eight short stories apiece each month, or four thousand, eight hundred a year altogether, it will be readily understood that editors are occasionally *compelled* to use mere sheaves of words of an import so mysterious that alongside of them the mystery as to the identity of the assailant of William Patterson becomes as clear as daylight, to fill up the blank pages that are staring them in the face. But beginners as a rule are not permitted the luxury of meaninglessness. This is a quality that is reserved for older writers who have already won their spurs, their right to the dull, prosy and incomprehensible—writers like Jennery Hames, author of "What Hazy Knew," and other authors of equal eminence, in whom graces of intricate style offset the lack of ideas in their productions. *Dullness and imperspicuity are the privilege of the famous, the damnation of the diminutive.* Make a note of this, if you please. The man or woman who has already won a place in the hearts of readers may, after he or she has celebrated a sixtieth birthday, write profitably about nothing at all, but not until then.

Now as to the nature of the idea itself, of course no hard and fast rules can be laid down. There is not a subject in the whole range of human life that some editor somewhere will not print a story about, provided you can find him, but I strongly recommend the beginner who desires to take the shortest cut to publication, if not to distinction, to start in along the lines of

mortuary fiction, something in which the undertaking business plays a more or less prominent part. If you can possibly discover some new method, for instance, of depriving a baby of his life, not necessarily painful to the child himself, but in a way that is peculiarly distressing to the hearts of parents, you will stand a most excellent chance of an immediate acceptance of your material. *The dead baby is to modern fiction what steel is to modern industry.*

The wholesale massacre of young women recently become engaged to be married is also a generally popular topic with magazine readers. It matters little how they are removed from the land of the living so long as they are removed, the two main points being first that they die, and second *that they do it on the eve of their wedding day.* There seems to be little choice between a death from the fumes of a leaking gas jet, a fall through a shaky bridge into some raging mountain stream, by poison taken unwittingly as a sedative, and being flung head first up against a stone wall by the sudden turning over of an automobile—you may make almost any [choice of these with an equal prospect of success.

It will always be well in respect to this matter, however, to exercise intelligent care in the selection of the particular magazine to which your effort is submitted. For example, a sporting magazine devoted to a good, healthy out-of-door spirit would prefer the automobile accident as the means of the young woman's taking off; a travel magazine would prefer the death in the raging mountain stream, particularly if by an intelligent exercise of your geographical knowledge you could specify the precise spot, and submit along with your story a number of clean cut kodak views of the surrounding country to be used in its illustration. It will add, too, to the value of your story if in the latter case you have the action take place along the route of some well known trunk line railroad that is known to advertise freely. But for the ordinary home magazine, the kind that is read by plain everyday, stay-at-home peo-

ple, the leaking gas jet or the overdose of chloral always suffices, although neither has attained as yet quite to the popularity of the slow, wasting tubercular disease, which enables the bride-to-be to linger painfully along through a greater number of pages. With respect to the latter style of story—the tubercular—your chances for success will be improved if in some way or other you can manage to convey the idea that you are writing about it with all the intimate knowledge of a clinical professor. An epigrammatic presentation of certain theories of disease, which you may get by reading the comic papers collaterally with the best medical journals, will add much to the convincing impressiveness of your work, especially if you take care to sprinkle your pages liberally with technical terms, properly italicized, having exclusive reference to what we may term your *disease-en-scène*.

To delve for a moment a little more deeply into detail in this matter, let me warn you not to make the mistake of supposing that the average editor, or, indeed, the reading public either, will be equally interested in a story dealing with a neurotic hero. *It is the girl interest that interests.* Whatever "symptoms" you introduce into your story must be those of the eternal feminine. Your men must be virile. I do not recall in any of the successful mortuary studies in which modern fiction has reveled since De Maupassant was first translated for English readers, that any author has succeeded in popularizing a hectic hero. It is my observation that nine out of ten men and women who constitute our reading public who would cheerfully part with a whole quarter to read of the sufferings of a young woman hopelessly afflicted with meningitis, with ten illustrations in eighteen colors by Charles Dana Pyle or Howard Chandler Gibson, would complain bitterly in seething letters to the editor if they were to find a story of a young man dying with curvature of the humerus in a ten cent magazine with or without illustrations of any sort. The significance of all of

which to us as literary beginners is that death is always a popular expedient in magazine literature, and that in a preponderance of cases large enough to constitute a rule, it must come to infants and young women shortly to be married, or to those who are the only support of nervously prostrated mothers, or fathers of dipsomaniacal habits—and, by the way, in this connection, let me impress upon you one other fact, which is, briefly, that you must never under any circumstances whatever permit an invalid mother or a rum-soaked father of your heroine to die in any one of your initial efforts. Literary morals insist upon the fulfillment by these *dramatis personæ* of the relentless purpose for which they were designed by a literary Providence, that of living forever to impede the progress of their children to happiness and peace.

Bear in mind also that in addition to these human interest qualities which have successfully withstood the test of persistent reiteration for years, the exigencies of modern business, induced by an appalling competition, compel editor and publishers to look for what may be called advertising values in the stories they publish. They want, and seek strenuously, something that will lure new readers; something that they can throw up into startling prominence in their advertising matter, so you will make no mistake if, in the preparation of your offerings, you can think up some title for your story that will sink deep into the public mind when it is spread before it. A specimen title, and its attendant advertisement, are herewith presented:

IN THE CHRISTMAS NUMBER OF
THE HYPERION
"TEA AND TUBERCULOSIS"

A Rollicking Tale of Life in a Sanitarium
BY

J. HENDERSON MCGUFFEY

All Newsdealers

Thirteen Cents

You will readily understand what a great commercial value such a tale would immediately betray to the eye of an astute publisher looking for some novelty to attract new subscribers, a value from which you might reason-

ably expect to benefit in promptness of acceptance, if not in alacrity of payment.

OTHER SUGGESTIONS

There are other kinds of stories that you can write if you prefer not to begin with mortuary fiction. The West, for instance, has always been a fertile and profitable field for American literary beginners, especially among those who have never been further West than Ninth Avenue, New York. The mere incident of their lifelong aloofness from the scenes they depict acts as a stimulant to the imagination. They are not hampered by any known facts, and write therefore with a greater freedom and buoyancy. A short and comparatively easy method of acquiring facility in the production of stories of this kind is to seek out some shop where they sell old magazines and weeklies. From the store of these purchase a dozen or more copies of obsolete papers containing illustrations by Frederic Remington, and with a pair of shears cut your *dramatis personæ* from them, cowboys, tenderfeet, greasers—whatever, in fact, you desire to present in your story. Then buy any one of George Barr McCutcheon's novels, remove the girl from the cover, dress her in buckskin trousers with leather fringe on the sides, put a rifle across her shoulder, a brace of pistols in her belt, and thrust her into the midst of the Remingtonians, defenseless and alone. Locate the whole party somewhere in Arizona, near a gold mine, and try to imagine what will occur to her that would please one of Lacy's shopgirls before the cowboys realize that she is a woman. She must be a dead shot with the rifle; when she rides horseback her hair must stream behind her like Buffalo Bill's in the face of an electric fan, she must be unerring with the lasso, and the only living creature this side of the "Great Divide"—don't bother to locate the "Great Divide," for that has never yet been done by any of our successful frontier authors—who can ride any kind of a horse that comes into camp.

An ordinarily industrious beginner, with a liking for killing off Indians by the tribe, instead of one by one, ought to be able to write forty-eight stories a year with such material without leaving Forty-second Street or getting further West than East Orange, New Jersey.

Do not worry over the dialect. You will find all the dialect you need in the writings of others, and you may use it freely, and without any fear that if you get it wrong you will ever be found out, for few of the editors have themselves traveled further West than Camden, and as for the Westerners, they have been so thoroughly disgusted with the Eastern-made Western story that for years nobody has been able to induce them to read one. The dialect consists mainly of a select assortment of everyday oaths and in the spelling of words like "where," "there" and "bear," as though they were pronounced "whar," "thar" and "bar." It will be well to manifest a little knowledge about horses—at least, enough to speak confidently of fetlocks, spavins and cruppers in the proper connection. The word "lariat" introduced a dozen or more times gives atmosphere to a tale of the plains, and some familiarity with the terminology of poker, barrooms and mining towns will help out. These can be obtained in almost any reasonably complete edition of Bret Harte's works. When introducing a new cowboy on the scene, if it is in an interior it is desirable that he should enter on horseback and open the conversation with some such relevant remark as "Whoopee!" or "By God, I've run you to arth at last, you slinking scab!" Should his entrance on the scene be out of doors, he can appear quietly and on foot if you wish.

The main feature of the Eastern-made Western story is sheer inconcinnity. Your heroine, *however*, posing as a man must, *nevertheless*, always be guided by certain amenities of her sex. Never let her do, even in the West, what a woman would not do under any circumstances anywhere, like shooting at a mirror over the counter of a bar, for instance. It is inconceivable that a

woman would ever shoot at a mirror under any circumstances, and she needs one all the more in that primitive civilization where seven or eight desperadoes are nightly given over to the noisy habit of shooting up the town for love of her.

Bearing these little niceties in mind, there is no reason why you should not become a capable and popular writer of Western tales for Eastern readers, and they should return you a handsome income in time, for they are always in demand. Even if you never have another idea in the whole course of your career, you can make these suffice, if you get some generic title to cover their limitless sequence, such as "Nevada Nights," "Wyoming Weeks," and later, "Montana Months," or possibly "Walla-Walla Twilights," with never a fear that the publisher will weary of publishing them or the reader of skipping them, as long as they are so easy to get, so unfailingly regular in supply that nobody need ever be anxious lest the hour of going to press shall arrive and find him with nothing on hand that's fit to print.

There is one other special brand of short story that beginners will find good to practice on. They are what we may call the "He Knew" stories. They deal with great historical figures, and should be got ready in time to be published in birthday numbers of our leading periodicals. The anniversary of the birth of every great man in history recurs every year, and no matter who he is some magazine somewhere will be found ready to celebrate the 100th, or 200th, or 6000th anniversary of the event. It gives the publisher an opportunity to get up a centenary number, or a ten-centenary number, or a millenary number, of his periodical, with a hundred extra pages of advertising matter in it. By reading your encyclopedia carefully and finding out when, where and why any specified great man was born, and imagining some pathetic or noble little incident that might have occurred between himself and some humble but big-hearted acquaintance, you will find

abundant material for the latest style of literary hit. The thing was done so preëminently well by the originator of the "He Knew" idea that it has had countless imitators, and has come to be regarded as a recognized method of creating a profound impression by those who can think of no other way. It is cordially recommended to beginners, and in order to encourage you all to try it I venture to lay before you a suggested series for a trial effort:

He Knew CAPTAIN JOHN SMITH.
He Knew TOM LAWSON.
He Knew MARCUS AURELIUS.
He Knew ANDREW CARNEGIE.
He Knew CARRIE NATION.
He Knew METHUSELAH.
He Knew EVERYTHING.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The things set forth in the preceding remarks are, of course, not all the things a beginner can do, but, with one exception, they are all that it is really desirable to mention to him at this time. We have indicated a sufficient variety of ways in which an aspiring literary youth can begin to keep him tolerably busy for some time, and, in fact, we can assure him that if he accomplishes no more than a half of what has been here set forth, he will have begun well.

The only other course that we can suggest to add to his comfort, the one exception just referred to, is that he do not begin at all. Should he decide on this course he will save himself much discouragement; much irritating critical abuse from literary panhandlers; much unnecessary hatred of that band of generally well meaning men, the editors; a lot of postage stamps, and no end of time which might be put to better uses, like driving a cab or washing windows in a bank.

As Doctor Johnson might have remarked to Lord Chesterfield, if he had thought it worth while to make the observation:

The Pen is mightier than the Sword—
In certain hands, 'tis true. But then,
In certain other hands, my Lord,
The Mop is mightier than the Pen

COUNT VON ELBERFELD'S WATERLOO

By MARY LUCKE CHALLIS

"I DISLIKE these week end parties. They are a rush; there is nothing but packing and unpacking and bridge."

The girl's voice was petulant, her handsome eyes very scornful. The man to whom she spoke looked at her with an amused tolerance.

"You are very young," he said, smiling, "very inexperienced, but even if you dislike the routine of this society life now, you will not always do so; and, if you have not the means of living as the women of your class live, you will end by being as discontented and as eager to make the money for the fashionable life by playing bridge or gambling in stocks and shares."

Mary Charteris listened with a cross little smile. The man's indulgent, fatherly tone annoyed and yet amused her.

"You forget that I am only nineteen, and that I have an allowance of three hundred a year, and shall have six when I am twenty-one. It is more than enough for anything I am likely to want."

She spoke with a superb assurance that irritated the great financier to whom she was talking. In a most irrational way it irritated him. He had made up his mind to show this child of nineteen that the best thing she could do would be to marry him, the multimillionaire, and rule society with the aid of his millions and his advice.

Then the absurdity of her point of view struck him and he laughed aloud.

"*Gnädiges fraulein*, you know not what you are saying! You know not

your world as I do. Take yourself, for instance. Because you are nineteen, you wear white cambric made by a useful maid, and look divine in it. But," he paused impressively, and there was a certain dignity about the big blond man that made Mary Charteris accord him increased attention, "you will not always be young, and you will discover the attractions of dress. I am going to be perfectly frank—you will not wear well, if you have but much of the anxieties of life."

His matter-of-fact audacity daunted Mary's inexperience for the moment. She mentally ran over the list of her claims to the charm so essential to a woman's worldly success. She had thought but very little of herself in a happy out-of-door existence with brothers and boy cousins of the ordinary type of good hearted, not particularly intellectual English lads. She had rowed, swum, fished, ridden, climbed trees and jumped brooks with them, learned to make her own flies and harness her own pony; had read very little and possessed very few womanly accomplishments. Her music was only fit for home consumption; she could sing like an untaught lark, and sketch like an embryo Phil May, and there they ended.

She was long limbed and slender; she possessed a frank, straightforward charm, a kind of Joan of Arc innocence and boyishness of manner, that completely conquered and enslaved Graf Hermann von Elberfeld, the German-American millionaire. Mary's idea of her own looks was—a mane of chestnut

hair, big brown eyes, rather a sunburnt face, very decent hands and feet—and there her catalogue came to an abrupt end. "Why shouldn't these things wear well?" she wondered.

She decided to find out. Accustomed to the bluntness of boys, she did not think Von Elberfeld as presumptuous and impertinent as an older or more conventionally trained girl might have thought him.

He struck her as being rather idiotic at times, this famous financier verging on old age—he was forty-eight—but he bored her rather less than the other men of the house party; therefore, she let him talk to her.

"Why cannot I wear well?" she demanded, frowning with absorbed interest in the question.

Von Elberfeld looked at her deliberately. His German autocratic bearing was only slightly tempered by American chivalry toward women, though he had spent eighteen years in the States since he, an officer of cuirassiers, had been banished at thirty after a year's imprisonment in a fortress for an offense that interest managed to keep from the world at large. Now he was returning to his native province, by the clemency of the reigning sovereign of that small independent state, the Grand Duke of Reichenbittel. He had never yet seen the woman to whom he would accord the proud position of Gräfinn von Elberfeld, until six months ago he met this handsome child, Mary Charteris. Her strangely fascinating, if immature, personality aroused in him an instant and unreasoning passion, and he had been trying, unsuccessfully so far, to find some means of bending her to his will. He studied her with a furtive, passionate irritation, noting her charmingly irregular features, redeemed from almost plainness by her glorious eyes, with their truthful gaze under their straight, serene brows, and their promise of all womanly wealth of feeling in the future.

"You have not the good features, and you will too thin grow if you permit to worry yourself about anything," he said with a bluntness that his

American veneer of politeness only just saved from frank brutality. "You will be very gaunt and haggard if you find not the smooth and easy life. Well dressed and content, you will be a beautiful woman; but all you now have is the 'devil's beauty of youth,'" he said gravely.

Mary listened with equal gravity.

"Well, and then?" she queried slowly, thinking of what he had said. She swung one slim foot to and fro as she sat sideways on the terrace wall. "I don't see how I am to help it. There'll always be some worries; there always are, you know. I can't play bridge to amuse myself; I hate it. And I can't always be with the boys, worse luck! So I don't see what I am to do. There's nothing to be done, is there?"

"Yes, there is," he said.

The solemnity of his manner was without any trace of the smoldering excitement that made his hands feel hot and damp.

"You can marry me, and never a single worry have of any kind. Wait! Let me finish! If you will marry me, you shall your own way go—to a great extent! There is nothing I will not give you." His breath came a little unevenly.

Mary Charteris listened to him with her cool, sunburnt cheeks unflushed, the little frown between her dark brows. This quiet, matter-of-fact proposal did not startle her in the least.

"But do you know, Count von Elberfeld, I should have one huge worry. I shouldn't care for you."

"You don't know," the man answered patiently. "But you cannot say, 'I will not do so'; kindness and consideration win any woman." He tried to look gentle and magnanimous.

He was quick to yield the argument in favor of his enormous wealth, for he saw that it did not outweigh her one jot.

"No," she said, shaking her head, "I don't think so; because I have made up my mind to marry Archie Travers."

Von Elberfeld's blood rose to the roots of his thick, grizzled, yellow hair

until his face was scarlet; even his pale blue eyes were bloodshot, and his mustache, that he wore à l'Empereur, bristled like an angry cat's.

Mary, accustomed to managing and understanding boys, studied him with much interest.

"I'm afraid you have a very bad temper, and that would be another reason why it would not do."

This cool verdict sobered the Graf like a dash of cold water.

"That you were engaged I never heard," he said stiffly, ignoring the imputation as to temper.

"I'm not," Miss Charteris announced with surprising frankness. "They—the boys—have all asked me to marry them at one time or another, but I think Archie has the most in him. I could make something of *him*; I couldn't of the others."

"I don't understand you," the big German said, bewildered and very angry.

"Perhaps not; but I mean that, if I must marry anyone, I shall marry Archie. He has not actually asked me yet, because he thinks I have money. That's so nice of him. The others all told me how they would spend it, but Archie means to make some to—"

"May I ask in what way this Mr. Travers intends to find a fortune to offer you?" Von Elberfeld interrupted grimly. This tall girl in her childish simple white serge and sailor hat was growing more fascinating every moment. He could not listen calmly to her praise of this penniless cub of a boy.

"He isn't Mr. Travers, he's Lord Travers. But his father's horribly extravagant, and Archie is trying to keep the property together. He has *some* money, of course, but he lives on his pay, and gives up his income to the estate."

Von Elberfeld gasped with astonishment and contempt.

"Lives on his pay? In what is he?"

"In the Royal Engineers out in India; at least, he's home on leave just now," Mary answered, wondering why boys and men were all alike in hating to hear each other praised, or even

spoken of. Only Archie was free from this singular jealousy. "But then I expect he knows I like him the best," she commented shrewdly in her own mind, as she watched Von Elberfeld's flushed face and suffused eyes.

"I cannot bear a man who looks like that," she decided. "I like Archie's strength; he's so cheery when things go wrong."

Aloud she said: "You see, Count von Elberfeld, it won't do in any way. I don't care about your money because I've enough of my own, and I like Archie the best because I can see you would be too hot tempered to get on comfortably with."

"But to you I would never show it," Von Elberfeld said humbly, amazed at his own self-control, while the blood was throbbing even in his finger tips.

For the first time Mary was vaguely conscious of the relation between man and woman, as she caught the suppli-
ance of his voice. She colored warmly. Then, because this sense of embarrassment was so new and so unpleasant, she spoke very stiffly.

"I am sorry, but please never speak of this to me again, Count von Elberfeld," and she moved away from him.

They were standing in an angle of terrace raised high above the gardens of an Elizabethan manor. Down below them a group of people were coming up from the lake that bordered the grounds.

One of them, a handsome woman, carefully painted and well preserved, looked up and waved her scarlet parasol gaily. As she prepared to mount the terrace steps Von Elberfeld signaled to her to go away. With a smile of comprehension she departed toward the house.

"I may tell you that your mother wishes our marriage, *fräulein*. She has very strong reasons. That her stock speculations are very unsafe I know; to help a stranger I might not feel inclined. But the interests of my wife's mother before my own almost would come. Then she is not a good bridge player. She is most unlucky."

Mary Charteris, with the quiet

balance of mind and bluntness of speech that characterized her, looked Von Elberfeld full in the face.

"Could you not find some less conventional way of enforcing your arguments? It would be quite stale in a book or on the stage," she said, with an amused scorn that stung him like a whip.

"There is no situation in life that is not stale, *fräulein*. If you disregard me for that reason, you will a terrible mistake make. I would be good to you and help you; why will you not do as I wish?" he asked, putting a huge restraint on himself.

"Because I do not like you," Mary Charteris said bluntly, and fairly ran away down the terrace steps, with crimson cheeks and indignant eyes.

Lady Susan Charteris went on toward the house swinging her parasol in a jubilant mood.

She was of a very sanguine nature and believed a thing was accomplished if she only wished it to be so. She painted her face because other women painted theirs, and paid beauty culturists immense sums to keep her handsome self looking as youthful as late hours, bridge and general gambling would allow. She knew very little about Von Elberfeld, although she had met him constantly for six months. He, having fallen in love with Mary at first sight, lost no time in making Lady Susan's acquaintance. Like a well trained soldier, he believed in carrying the outworks first of all. Lady Susan was almost feverishly excited by the golden prospect ahead of her.

That Mary would be mad enough to refuse the man for whose capture all the mothers and daughters in their set were openly scheming never entered her mother's beautifully dressed head. Hence, when she encountered Mary's red cheeks and angry eyes, she wondered why girls should be absurdly upset by so simple a thing as a proposal.

"Why are you rushing away, Mollie? What is the matter? You ought to be

only too glad that Count von Elberfeld wants to marry you. Think how lucky you are that he is not as hideous as that Jew millionaire Amy Wilson married!"

Mary stood still, facing her mother. Suddenly all the warm color fell out of her charming face. She was very pale, and her brown eyes had a gleam of steel in them.

"Mother! You don't think I have accepted Count von Elberfeld?" she asked incredulously.

"Oh, well, if you haven't, you will," Lady Susan said lightly. "I don't believe in rushing at a man. It flatters his vanity too much. Go and make yourself a little less schoolgirlish, for heaven's sake, and don't fuss about the very luckiest thing that could have happened to you. Think of all the good you will do, with millions of money to spend!" And Lady Susan went off humming an air from "The Earl and the Girl." But out of sight of her daughter's accusing and horrified eyes she clenched her hand furiously.

"You *shall* marry him!" she cried. "Heavens! To think that such a chance should come to you! It is throwing pearls with a vengeance. If only it came to me, I should be a religious woman forever afterwards."

It happened that this particular week end party was held in Trentham Abbey, not two miles from Travers Place.

Archie, the son and heir of the Earl of Lentless, at home on leave for a year, was putting the whole of his sturdy nature and very capable brains into the supervision of the affairs of an almost hopelessly entangled estate. He was walking back from the agent's house, wondering a little drearily how he could possibly stem the rising tide of debt, when he came face to face with the one person in the whole world whom he most desired to meet.

Perched on a gate, through which he must pass, was Mary Charteris.

"Mollie! Where did you come from?"

His cap off, he climbed up beside her,

and the two clasped hands as boys might do.

"I am staying at Sir Nicholas Trentham's. Mamma decided to go down there on Friday. I hate it! There is a whole houseful of stupid people, and nothing but bridge, with intervals for refreshment, from morning until night."

Archie, who knew that the Trentham parties were counted among the smartest in town, or out of it, laughed delightedly.

"Bless you for the veriest little green-horn! You are not thankful for your social mercies, I'm afraid."

"I'm not! But don't tease me. I must have things settled once for all; and you must please do as I want. I've waited to see you."

The young fellow, addressed with this unaccustomed note of supplication, jumped down and stood in front of her with an inquisitive air. He made a very personable match for her slender good looks, with his six feet two of well-proportioned height and a certain indefinable charm of expression softening a strong, heavily molded face. Mary eyed him with frank approval.

"Oh, Archie, there is nothing like an English gentleman," she said, with apparent irrelevance. "Look here, won't you marry me right away? I know it's only my money that is preventing your asking me. Please do it now; it's really important."

There was the slightest pink flush on her cool cheeks, but it was due to the vehemence of her fear that Archie might prove refractory. The handsome boy pulled his gray leather cap well back on his dark head, then pocketed it in sheer embarrassment. But when he saw how soberly in earnest was his old playmate he pulled himself together.

"What's up, little girl?" he asked affectionately in their old-time vernacular. "I'll do anything you like, if you'll only explain quite clearly what you want, and why."

Mary put out a slim, sunburnt hand, which he took and held respectfully. By this time a smile was lurking under his mustache, but she did not see it.

"Then that is the first thing. We are engaged, I suppose, as you can't be married without that, first of all, can you?" she demanded.

"I suppose so," he assented doubtfully, "since you say it. But look here, Mollie, it's all very well our playing at—"

"We are not playing at anything; it is real, deadly earnest," she interrupted vehemently. "Listen to me. You know you *do* care for me. I'll tell you how I am sure of it some other time; but I'll say now that I always meant to marry you, when you had got over your pride about my stupid money and asked me properly."

"But, my dear child, it's you who are asking me! You certainly are the most amazing young person. Oh, Mollie, don't! You don't really care for me, and—I'm too much in love with you to stand having you as a wife if you don't—feel as I do. You don't know what you are talking about."

Mary slipped down from the gate, and stood a little apart from him.

In all the twenty-six years of his life she had never seen that look on his face nor heard that tone in his voice, though she had known him since they were babies.

"Archie," she said beseechingly, "don't make me afraid of you, just when I need you so much. I *do*—care," she repeated, but this time she blushed when she said it.

"I don't want 'care'; I want your love. If I had that, your wretched money might go hang!" he cried, losing his head a little.

She stood still looking at him, her great wide eyes dark under the shadow of her hat brim and her lips just apart with the loveliest indecision. She put her hands out toward him for a second, and then clasped them together unconsciously.

Travers, fired out of his cool self-possession, caught them in his own.

"Mollie, don't you want to see what your new possession looks like?" he asked a few moments later.

It was the tone of the old Archie again, not the new bewildering one.

Mary, taking her self-possession tight in both hands, looked up.

"I shall never manage him properly if I feel like this," she thought, with a firm belief in her mission as his future guide and directress. She lifted her head, which she always carried rather like a stag's, and gazed at him with an attempt at the old fearlessness. What Archie saw was a new delicious shyness against which she struggled. For a few moments he forgot everything but the sudden change in the world of their two lives; then he remembered that he was no wiser as to the urgent reason advanced by her for this new state of affairs.

With a rush of strong dislike toward Count von Elberfeld she explained, not too lucidly:

"You see, Archie, if mamma makes up her mind that I must do a thing, she has a perfectly fiendish way of making me do it. Not that I ever have done anything I didn't want to," she reflected, "but—I have had—sometimes—not a very pleasant time, and this is something she will be worse than ever about."

"Brute!" Archie said furiously, and he might have referred to either Lady Susan or the Count. "You must not be left there a day longer than I can help, Mollie. The man's a beast!"

"No," Mary said, calmly judicial, "he's bad tempered, and I wouldn't marry him if he was the last man; but he's not a beast. He can't help being a German, you know."

"He had no right to talk to you as he did; to tell you you would not wear well and to tempt you to marry him for his money."

"Perhaps not, but I like knowing things that help me to understand other things," Mary said cryptically, frowning. "I am very glad that I know I sha'n't wear well, and why I sha'n't. By the bye, Archie, you must think if *you* will mind it, for I'm afraid you and I will have a good many worries. Shall you mind if I grow thin and gaunt and haggard?" she asked anxiously. She took the lapels of his

old shooting coat and shook him gently to and fro.

He looked down at the girl's soft face with eyes out of which a boy's adoration and a man's passion gleamed for an instant. Having seen something of the world, he could understand and appraise this exceptional nature with an unusual justness of judgment, for he had been trained in a hard school.

He put his hands on her shoulders. "Look here, Mollie! I know you'll believe me—we don't tell each other lies, you and I." Mary nodded gravely. "Well, then, you've got all the good looks I care about, and if I shall see you with lines in your face and hollows under your eyes, because they'll have come from things we've worried through together, shoulder to shoulder, I shall like them even better than I care about your face now."

If ever there had been the most shadowy chance that Mary Charteris would listen to the tempting of Count von Elberfeld's millions, it vanished at that moment.

At night, in an alcove in the great drawing-rooms, Lady Susan lectured Von Elberfeld on his treatment of her daughter.

"You see, my dear Count, you don't understand our English independence of spirit, and Mary's least of all. She was allowed by her father to run wild with boys." As a matter of fact, each year Lady Susan had relegated to the care of a sister blessed with seven sons her own four boys and one daughter, while she and her quiescent husband, as long as he lived, wandered from London to the various fashionable resorts on the Continent and back again. "Consequently, Mary has opinions of her own; but, then, so have I, and I can sympathize with her."

"If you were in your daughter's place, would you refuse me as she has done?" Von Elberfeld asked bluntly.

With admirable self-possession and an airy laugh, Lady Susan hid the tremor that the question caused to

thrill throughout her tightly laced person.

"I'm not given to contemplating impossibilities," she cried. "Besides which, a woman of my age knows the value of money, and a child doesn't. If I could have your millions without you I might think of what I should do," she said, with a cool impudence that piqued Von Elberfeld.

"Why, may I ask?" he inquired.

"Oh, you would be too hot tempered and exacting. I love peace, and so, I suspect, does Mollie," she explained, smoothing the wrinkles out of her satin skirt and adjusting the lace round her fine shoulders.

Von Elberfeld attempted a smile, but unconsciously scowled instead. Lady Susan, watching him, wondered why indecently rich men were always so impossible in either person or character. This man was good looking in a large, rough way, but he was German down to his boots. For all her selfishness, she shivered a little at the idea of Mollie in his unhampered power as his wife.

Nevertheless, Lady Susan intended that she should be so, and herself a mother-in-law in clover.

"On the whole, I prefer such a role to that of wife. He is the worst type of autocrat," she thought, with a mental shoulder shrug. With lazy impertinence she said aloud:

"I wonder why millionaires cannot be nice, amiable men sometimes. You are, all of you, such bears."

Von Elberfeld looked at her with something like admiration. Was she flouting him carelessly or with intention?

"Because, Lady Susan, if they were nice, amiable men, they wouldn't have the character, the grit, the grasp that a man who makes money must have."

"A Napoleon in fact, and as utterly without bowels of compassion. It's very splendid, I've no doubt, but it does not make for domestic bliss."

"See here, Lady Susan, will you teach your daughter those ideas about me?"

"And why not?" she asked, fanning herself carelessly.

"Because it will pay you not to do so. Now don't bristle and look shocked. Your world, my dear Lady, I know, and that you need money above all things I know. I do not insult you by a cheque. Tips as to buying and selling certain shares that will supply you all you can possibly want I will give you."

"H'm, I couldn't set a limit to what I do want; but I wouldn't buy it on the terms you mean to offer Mollie," she said, blushing with excitement under her rouge and powder.

"But you will not prejudice her? Look here, why not come and stay with me next week? Let her see what she will possess if she marries me. She must in time be impressed."

"She is distractingly young and foolish," Lady Susan said regretfully. "You can try and dazzle her, though, by letting her see what you can give her in the way of wealth. But let me tell you one thing, for goodness' sake, do let some tailor, who knows what he is about, turn you out properly. Young girls will balk at the sight of square-toed boots and a German interpretation of plain clothes. It's a pity you can't always turn out in uniform; I dare say you would be quite decent in that," she added, with a coolly cheerful impertinence that positively astounded and almost charmed the man before whom most women bowed as before a god.

"Where your daughter got her astonishing indifference from, I can see," he thought. "I believe you mean it, my Lady, after all. That you should such things say, after my offer to help you with your money matters, without fear that you anger me, really is worthy of admiration."

"Well, most gracious Lady," he said aloud, "is it a bargain between us?"

"Yes, Count, if you give me a guarantee that I shall not have my trouble with Mollie for nothing. She won't be easy to drive, I can assure you."

Von Elberfeld laughed as he penciled

some memoranda on a page of his note book.

"Follow those directions, *gnädiges frau*, and you will see that by helping me you score heavily. You have my most sincere congratulations on your capacity for administration. It is great. Next week I shall invite a house party to meet you at Abbey Holt. I mean to have my estate in England as in the States. Later on you will visit my ancestral *schloss*."

He let the slip of paper flutter down onto Lady Susan's satin lap, and watched her complacently as she read it.

"Lady Susan, how do you do?" and "Mother, here is Archie!" two voices said simultaneously.

The two handsome young people stood before the Count and Lady Susan in all the glory of their youth. Their new relation to each other had given it a finer edge, a more wonderful depth of expression, yet they were apparently as cheerfully indifferent to each other as of old.

It was Von Elberfeld who read the meaning of the soft color on Mary's cheek and the light in her great eyes, who noticed the squarer set of Archie's broad shoulders and his look of tender responsibility. The big German was accustomed to studying men and women. He was also used to acting instantly on what he read in them.

"That is the cub, and he has something said to her," he thought, with a spasm of rage. Then a sudden inspiration came to him.

He rose to his feet, clicked his heels together and bowed profoundly.

"Ah, most gracious Lady," he said in German, turning from Lady Susan to Mary and back again. "This is evidently the friend of youth, who will be glad to hear of the betrothal of your adored daughter to my most unworthy self. Mary, you forgive my making this sudden announcement, but we agreed—your mother and I—that it is best so. I would present you to my sovereign, the Grand Duke of Reichenbittel, tonight. He comes even now. Allow me!" And before two astound-

ed and startled people could collect their scattered wits or speak Von Elberfeld, with the sudden strategy of a Napoleon, swept them into the center of a little group, and Mary found herself curtsying to a white-haired, benevolent old man, who congratulated her on the magnificent position she would one day hold as Countess von Elberfeld.

It all happened so suddenly that Mary's independence of spirit, strangely softened by her newborn love for Archie, failed her entirely. Her in-born horror of a public scene also froze the words on her white lips, as Lady Susan, catching up the role assigned her, played it as only she could play it.

Archie was away on the outer edge of the widening circle. In its center stood Mary Charteris in her white lace dress, a tall, slender child, whose cheeks and lips had paled until she seemed a snow maiden rather than the glowing, brilliant girl of ten minutes ago.

All night long Mary paced up and down her room, and Lady Susan kept guard over her.

She had succeeded in making the stricken girl believe that she was guiltless of all complicity in this masterly move of the Napoleon of Finance.

"Certainly, I had promised to take you to stay with him next week, but I think you know me well enough to understand that I should not have consented to such an audaciously executed maneuver as that. Mary, he will be very good to you. He told me he would, if you accepted him. I believe he will be, if you are only ordinarily civil to him. Oh, child, can't you see? You cannot get out of it. The old Grand Duke was so delighted, so gracious to you; you can't make a worldwide scandal by throwing Count von Elberfeld over now. Tomorrow morning your engagement will be in all the papers; and a Charteris does not break his or her word, remember! You may say you never gave it, but who will believe you? No one will believe that a man could do as Von Elberfeld did on the spur of the moment. It

is too incredible. If I hadn't seen it I couldn't have believed it myself. It was magnificent, and for once it *was* war. Mary, you are routed horse and foot by a perfectly reckless and unscrupulous man. For God's sake take it sensibly, now that we cannot help ourselves."

But not one word could Lady Susan win from the pale girl, who never ceased her steady walk up and down, up and down the great bedroom. At last she went to one of the long windows and pressed her forehead against the glass. Her quiet, evenly balanced nature was struggling against the first inclination to hysteria it had ever known. For the time being her whole soul was crying out against the possibility of Archie's believing this monstrous thing, this incredible perversion of the truth. She knew that it would be almost impossible to see him again alone. She would always be under supervision and coerced. The wild improbability of such a thing as this which had happened to her was enough to set even the steadiest brain whirling. And she was only a child, after all. Lady Susan, with sleep weighing down her cleverly tinted lids—for she too had gone through a cataclysm of emotions in the last few hours—yawned piteously, but Mary never moved.

It seemed hours that she stood there watching the gardens lying peacefully under the moonlight. Lady Susan's head drooped forward, then sideways against the cushions of her sofa, but she still watched her daughter's motionless white figure with half closed eyes. Little by little the mists cleared away from Mary's brain. She began to think clearly and steadily. By and by she was aware of a dark shadow moving in the shelter of the rose hedge under her window. She turned her head noiselessly and looked into the room. Lady Susan was asleep, half sitting, half lying on the wide sofa some distance away.

Mary listened to her even breathing, with her heart almost deafening her. She waited for ten minutes by the tiny watch in her bangle. Then she caught

up a black evening cloak and a black lace scarf. Without a sound she slipped into the long-sleeved wrap and wound the veil closely about her head and face. Finally she went to a writing table and wrote on a sheet of paper:

Archie, I am going to the Grand Duke's room. It is on the ground floor in the West Wing, the first on the left of the great sundial. I have been nearly mad with fear and grief, and my only hope is to tell the Grand Duke the truth. Come to me there.

She went out onto the balcony and waited in the shadow until she was certain it was Archie in the darkness of the rose walk.

Her nerves crisped at the mere idea that it might be Von Elberfeld, after all, and she drew back.

But it was Archie. Dazed by the sudden flood of German that he only imperfectly understood, he did not realize at the time what had happened. He took the whole thing to be a florid introduction to royalty of Lady Susan and her daughter, by a theatrical German bouncer.

It was not until he heard two of the Grand Duke's suite discussing the affair that he had even an inkling of the truth.

Then he went half mad for the moment. Mary had been discreetly taken away by Lady Susan, and he knew he could not speak to her again that night.

Not for one instant did he distrust her. After the first few moments of blind fury he guessed the meaning of Von Elberfeld's daring move, and accorded him an unwilling admiration for his swift audacity.

He would not leave the gardens. For hours he wandered about, wondering which was Mary's window. He saw the lights go out in the various bedrooms, and only certain windows on the ground floor remain illuminated. In two were the bridge sets, who played all night. In the third the old Grand Duke, who read most of the night in his armchair, as he was so sleepless, was just awaking from his first uneasy slumber.

Mary had heard this peculiarity of the old Prince's discussed, and in her

anger and misery she determined to appeal to the sovereign, who alone could dictate to Count von Elberfeld.

"Perhaps even he cannot, but I must try," she thought piteously.

When Archie's moonlight whitened face came into distinct view she slipped off one of her heaviest bangles and wrapped her note round it into a tight ball.

Then with a boy's easy wide-armed sweep she threw it straight across the lawn. It caught Archie a smart blow on his arm and dropped at his feet.

Mary, holding her breath, slid like a shadow through the darkened corridors and down the stairs of the West Wing.

Outside the Grand Duke's door she hesitated an instant and listened. She heard a coal drop on the hearth, for the old man, chilly even in summer, would have a fire always. Then the leaves of a book rustled. She was standing in a square passage in the thickness of the old walls; the outer door was shut behind her, but the inner one was ajar. She could see the Prince's high-domed head with its white hair under a black silk skull cap, his fine ivory hands crossed on his stick, his black brocaded satin *robe de chambre*, in the light of the candles burning on either side of a tall bookrest in front of him. She put her hands over her face for an instant. Then, with a breath that was a prayer, she went into the room. The sound of her silken skirts made the old man look up. He saw, to his enormous astonishment, a veritable lady of romance, veiled and cloaked, with white hands holding her draperies closely about her throat.

The next second, as he rose, a girl with a death-white face was crouching by his chair.

"My child! Most gracious *fräulein!*" He was puzzled and astonished, for Mary Charteris, for the first time in her life, was crying bitterly with excitement and fear, with dread of Von Elberfeld and the feeling that she was meant to create the gravest of scandals. But her memory of Archie's words that afternoon would have carried her through worse matters than this diffi-

cult and perhaps shameful thing she must do.

At first she could not speak; at last, reassured by the old Prince's gentleness and courtesy, the whole pitiful story came out in her pretty, halting German.

At first the Grand Duke was incredulous; then he started as he remembered something of long years ago.

"Ah, ha! So!" he said. "My child, do not thus cry! I will help you! I can, and so cleverly, can I help you! It is a comedy, my little one, a most excellent comedy, for our good Count. And for you—it will be your real lover."

There was a slight sound at the window. Mary rose to her feet, her eyes drowned in tears.

"May he come in?" she sobbed breathlessly. "It is Archie. He must tell you himself; he must know that it was not I who—"

"Bring him in, my child," the old Prince said, enjoying the scene with a secret zest that Mary could not guess. He unfastened his window himself, and Archie, pale, almost surly from an Englishman's hatred of anything beyond the line of normal existence, walked into the room.

He bowed over the Grand Duke's hand with a sufficient if rather stiff curtsy; then he turned to Mary.

The sight of her wet eyes and her mouth quivering like a grieved child's in spite of her courage, caused him to forget the Grand Duke entirely.

He never quite knew how it happened, but when the old Prince spoke to him he answered incoherently above Mary's bent head hidden against his shoulder.

"Can you not speak my tongue?" the Prince inquired cordially, delighted with this fine specimen of young English manhood.

Before Archie among his few phrases could find one that seemed to fit the occasion, Mary raised her head.

The black lace had fallen; her glorious chestnut hair was loosened round her white, appealing face; her eyes were the stars of a rainy morning.

"No, Your Highness, he cannot, but I will for him, if Your Highness cannot speak English."

"Perhaps I make shift to find English enough to speak comfort to you. Tell me—will you that I am witness to your formal betrothal, my children?"

Their eyes answered for them in their embarrassment.

"Then you will repeat some word, and with this ring you will—eh?" the old Prince said, smiling and slipping off one of his own rings.

Archie took the great sapphire set in diamonds, and holding it on Mary's finger he and she repeated certain solemn words after the Grand Duke.

"Now in a document we will witness this unique betrothal."

In a big German script, but in English, the old man wrote a formal announcement of the fact, but when their three signatures were placed at the foot of the page he put his thin white hand over their joined ones and blessed them.

Long before the lazy Sunday household was awake, and when Mary, who had stolen to her room unseen, was sleeping peacefully, Von Elberfeld was summoned to an audience with the Grand Duke. It was a furiously astounded but strictly courtierlike man who faced his hereditary ruler in the uncertain light of the flickering candles.

The shutters were still closed, the fire still burning, and the atmosphere of the luxurious room was heavy enough to account for the hard flush on Von Elberfeld's rugged face.

He stood to attention, rigidly upright and at first was silent.

The Grand Duke had been speaking at some length, but when he ceased Von Elberfeld essayed to answer him.

The old Prince, taking a pinch of

snuff, stopped in the act of applying it to his nose, that was curved like an eagle's beak. With a gesture of the diamond-studded box, that silenced the furious man before him, the Grand Duke finished his pinch and dusted the shining surface of his long robe with a black lace scarf.

Von Elberfeld stared at this most unusual kerchief. The Grand Duke, watching him as a bird of prey its victim, smiled blandly.

"Ah, an inadvertence! It is a souvenir!" he said, laying it carefully on his open book. Then his whole bearing changed. Now it was the sovereign who spoke to the subject, the general to the private.

"So! The Graf von Elberfeld will not rebel! He will find it wiser to accept our ruling in this matter, seeing that there is still that little misfortune, the affair of a fortress, which he would appear to have forgotten. Also the question of our permission for his repatriation. The Graf will see that it was of all things the easiest for the newspapers to make a mistake in the report of his betrothal. It is to the mother, *not* the daughter of the house of Charteris. The Graf Hermann von Elberfeld marries Lady Susan, and we ourselves will give away the two brides when at the same hour the marriage is performed of Lord Travers and his betrothed, Fräulein Mary Charteris. We forgot to mention that it is necessary for Graf von Elberfeld to settle a sufficient sum on his future bride. A million English pounds will, we think, suffice to support the state we shall expect the gracious Lady to keep in our dominions, and, for our credit, abroad also. The Graf von Elberfeld will now doubtless wish for a few hours' sleep before he brings his bride for our congratulations. A pleasant night to him, or rather morning."



THE WISDOM OF HAROUN THE JUST

By HERMAN DA COSTA

THE Sultan holds Court in his Palace. Hail, Lord of the Earth and the Sky!
Disguised, he goes forth 'mid his People. Stop pushing there, You
with the Eye!

The Palace is made for the Monarch, and Crowds for the Very Small Fry.

My Son, if a Bad Man pursue you, stand firm, though in Courage you lack.
The Fighter goes scatheless in Battle when Cowards are shot in the Back.

The Devil has begged for Forgiveness—and hark to the Curses they fling!
The Devil has left, unforgiven, and proudly the Godly do sing.
If He who has erred is Reminded, why wonder that Shaitan be King?

My Daughter, if One shall entreat you, yield not, though your Feelings agree.
Since when has the Fruit that has Fallen the Flavor of that in the Tree?

My Son, you have asked me a Question. What good is the Fame that we Seek,
Since Man is the Breath of a Moment and Heaven is made for the Meek?
I answer, Who told You of Heaven? Live, though You be Here but a Week.

The Potter in making his Vessels takes Water for Molding his Clay.
So Man in the Hands of a Woman is Molded with Tears to her Way.

Two things that they Shewed me I mocked at, and Now I do wish they were
Mine:

The Clutch of a Masterful Baby and bottles of mellow Old Wine.
The Blessings we lack we Desire, and Those that we have, They are Thine.

The Jackal howls Fiercely and Loudly, but see how it jumps at a Squeak!
Fear not if He boast of his Valor. The Bravest are always the Meek.

When Man with Desire is swollen He tinkers with Truth in his Need.
What New Talk is this of the Ponies—this Talk of Improving the Breed?
If Vice must take Raiment from Virtue, how naked must Vice be, indeed!

The Ass that yields not to a Beating is tempted with Promise of Food.
Am I then an Ass to be offered Reward if I always be Good?

Map out for your Son in his Boyhood Careers that will make him a King.
But when he has grown to a Manling, Forget it—and let go the String.
Remember that Birds are not Donkeys, and sometimes a Donkey can Sing.

We laugh at the Pride of the Pauper and run to give Honor to Rank.
Would You be acknowledged as Mighty? Go get an Account at the Bank.

Much Talking I hear about Marriage, and this is it all at the Least:
A Woman is bound by her Children, but Men must be bound by the Priest.
'Tis easy forgetting the Dinner when One has enough of the Feast.

The Hawk flying over the Barnyard finds only the Chickens are Bold.
Ah, pity the Young Man of Twenty who flirts with a Thirty-Year-Old!

Says One: "Trust Him not for a Moment; a Rogue and a Robber is he."
Another: "Why, nonsense! The Fellow has always been Honest with Me."
If You are not sure 'tis an Apple, why trouble to climb up the Tree?

The Father who says to his Firstborn, "In This, and in That I will Rule,"
Expecting Obedience straightway, nor brooking Delay, is a Fool.
A Man in his Nonage is stubborn. Is Coaxing not made for a Mule?



THE LESSON

By HELEN HAMILTON DUDLEY

SWIFT you come running to me, child,
With the light of dawn in your eyes,
And your sweet, young mouth like the living red
That swoons in the sunset skies;
All rosily warm and eagerly fleet
You come and fling yourself at my feet.

You hold toward me a lesson page
That you cannot understand
And point to the difficult words thereon
With a soft, bewildered hand;
Artfully coaxing advice, the while,
With your tender eyes and dew-kissed smile.

And I tell you, dear, the things you ask—
Alas that I learned them before!
I would I could snatch from Fate's cold grasp
The book that will puzzle you more;
Deep written pages that must be turned
Till the whole of the sordid lesson is learned.

Swift you go flitting from me, child,
With the knowledge-mote in your eyes
And, sage that I am in the school of life,
I weep that you, too, shall be wise.
Ah, God! that you must go out of my sight
Alone, down the heartbreaking pathway of night!

A RAG DOLL

By EVANGELINE M. LENT

"The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid . . . and a little child shall lead them."—Isaiah.

CHARACTERS

JACK SPENCER (*a business man*)
RHODA DUVAL (*a young widow*)
MAGGIE O'ROURKE (*a waif*)
CLOTILDE (*a maid*)

PLACE: *New York City.*

TIME: *The present; a winter afternoon.*

SCENE—A luxuriously furnished reception room adjoining RHODA's boudoir. There is an archway showing hall at the left. Entrance to boudoir is at the right. Window with heavy curtains at the left. Between these a cheval glass. A tea table at the right, on which are cups and saucers, spirit lamp, etc. A fireplace with mantel shelf, on which are a photograph of a child and one of a man. Against the latter rests a rag doll. Fur rug in front of the fire. Armchair near the fireplace. Settee and trunk at the left. Several electric lamps and chandelier.

CLOTILDE (*entering from the hall, carrying a plate of cakes and a brass kettle, which she puts on the tea table, arranging materials for making tea, while singing a French song*)

Voilà! Madame has but to strike ze match and Monsieur Spencer is served wiz tea. Some day I shall be a bride so charming as shall be Madame Duval tomorrow. Zen no more shall I wear zis *petit* bonnet and zis apron. (*Discovers letter in apron pocket.*) Ah, ze lettair! I forget him. (*Reads postmark, going up stage to boudoir.*) "Boston!" Ze sistair of madame write about ze leetel Babette. (*Kisses letter.*) Mignonne, pretty bébé, Babette. Madame! Madame! Anozer lettair so soon about your bébé! (*Goes out.* A moment later reenters carrying

an armful of feminine apparel, a small white silk shawl, laces, lingerie and slippers. She goes to window.) Snow! All ze time snow! Our wedding journey shall be cold. No, no! Ze snow is not cold wiz Monsieur Spencer.

RHODA (*off*)

Clotilde, what are you doing?

CLOTILDE (*absent-mindedly*)

I take our wedding journey wiz Monsieur Spencer in ze snow. (*Goes to trunk.*) No, no, madame! I pack ze baggage, madame, I pack ze baggage!

RHODA (*entering from boudoir and going to cheval glass. She wears a handsome evening gown much bespangled and trimmed with artificial flowers. She carries a hand mirror*)

I want you to clean my diamond necklace at once; then bring it to me.

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CLOTILDE

Bien, madame. (Goes toward boudoir.) On ze last marriage of madame I do not clean ze necklace, for *zen* it shine bright because Monsieur le Marquis bring it new from ze shop to his bride—*si belle (with contempt)*. Monsieur le Marquis—bah! *(Goes out.)*

RHODA

Clotilde, don't forget to pack the belladonna for my eyes. *(Surveys her reflection in mirror.)* Superb! Ravishing! This gown is certainly the gem of my trousseau. It would be even more becoming if the lamps were lighted! Clotilde!

CLOTILDE *(off)*

Oui, madame.

RHODA

Turn on the lights.

CLOTILDE *(at boudoir door, rubbing necklace with chamois skin)*

Ze lights? When we have already ze day, madame?

RHODA

Light the lamps. Give me the necklace.

CLOTILDE

But, madame, he is not so soon bright—

RHODA

Never mind; give it to me. *(Takes necklace and puts it on. CLOTILDE turns on lights.)* I can't wait until I am married; I want Mr. Spencer to see this wonderful creation today. Draw the heavy curtains; nothing can be becoming in that vulgar glare. *(Looks at her reflection in hand mirror as she goes to fireplace.)* Jack must fall in love with me all over again. Clotilde, did you go to Madame Bouchet's for my hair wash?

CLOTILDE

La, la! I forget him.

RHODA *(petulantly)*

And tomorrow I am off on my wedding trip! You must get the hair wash today, do you understand?

CLOTILDE

But, madame, ze telephone refuse to speak because of ze snow.

RHODA

Then go down to the hairdresser's shop.

CLOTILDE

Mon Dieu, madame, only ze big strong man go out in zis storm.

RHODA

Don't argue. Go!

CLOTILDE

A votre service, madame. (Goes toward boudoir.)

RHODA

Clotilde, bring my powder puff and hare's foot.

CLOTILDE

Bien, madame. (Goes out.)

RHODA *(prinking and readjusting flowers on her gown)*

I hope Jack did not go down to the office today. Men expose themselves to the elements so foolishly. Dear boy, he will soon be coming in for a cup of tea and a kiss.

CLOTILDE *(entering from boudoir with tray containing a powder puff, hare's foot and a letter. She goes to RHODA and extends tray toward her)*

Madame! Madame forgets her let-tair in ze boudoir on ze floor.

RHODA *(carelessly taking letter and tossing it on mantel. She discovers rag doll propped against man's photograph and throws it across the stage)*

What is this doll doing here?

CLOTILDE *(excitedly)*

Mon Dieu, madame! Today I finds him in ze nursery. Ze nurse of Babette she forget to pack him in ze baggage when zey go away three weeks ago, and ze *pauvre petit* love zis *poupée beaucoup, beaucoup*. He eat wiz Babette, he sleep wiz Babette, he take from Babette ze *ennui (suavely)*. So zat madame shall discover ze *poupée*, I make him to sit on monsieur. Madame shall send it to Babette? *(Picks up doll.)*

RHODA

No!

CLOTILDE

But, madame, everybody some time desire to be amused. Ze *poupée* is a comrade for Babette. He teach her to love like a mamma. She learn—

RHODA *(snatching doll and tossing it on mantel)*

She can learn nothing from a bundle of rags. *(Gazes at man's photograph.)*

CLOTILDE

Shall madame desire zat I pack ze photograph to go on our wedding journey?

RHODA (*sentimentally*)

Not until Mr. Spencer comes to take its place.

CLOTILDE

No, no, madame! I speak of ze photograph of your *bébé*, Babette.

RHODA

If you like—no, never mind. I shall see her in ten days.

CLOTILDE

Ze beautiful Babette!

RHODA

Is she beautiful? (*Sits in armchair near fire.*)

CLOTILDE

Like *l'amour*.

RHODA

Does she resemble me? Don't dare say she looks like *him*.

CLOTILDE

Monsieur le Marquis was *assez beau*. RHODA (*indicating mirror, etc., indignantly*)

Remove these things.

CLOTILDE

Très bien, madame. (*Takes mirror, etc., and goes up stage.*) It is not ze fault of ze *bébé* zat she look like her papa (*flatteringly*). But ze eye of Babette, he is like ze diamond. He is *beau* like ze eye of madame. (*Goes into boudoir.*)

(*A street organ is heard in the distance playing a popular air.*)

RHODA (*examining with new interest the child's photograph*)

Her eyes are beautiful. Jack says she looks like me.

(*JACK appears at hallway entrance. He is a well dressed, dignified, fine-looking man about thirty-five. He removes his overcoat, rubs his hands together as if suffering from the cold, and goes to RHODA.*)

JACK

Any room for me in your castle of meditation?

RHODA

Jack! There isn't room for anybody else.

JACK

Dearest! (*He puts his arms about her and his cold hand touches her neck.*)

RHODA (*drawing away with a little gasp*)

Oh! That reminds me of another Jack.

JACK (*jealously*)

Whom do you mean?

RHODA

Jack Frost.

JACK (*going to fire*)

He and I are both brutes. Forgive us, dear. This is the cruelest day of the winter.

RHODA

It can't be, Jack. It is the day before tomorrow, and tomorrow is our wedding day. (*They stand together gazing into the fire.*)

JACK

Frozen fingers—flames—pain. Some sage has said the human heart suffers as keenly when subjected to the fires of love.

RHODA

That is not true, Jack. I don't suffer because I love you.

JACK

This daring philosopher excludes the love of man and woman. He contends that character building is inspired only by fraternal, Platonic, parental love.

RHODA

A fool, Jack, not a philosopher, eh? We know, don't we? (*Becomes suddenly interested in her costume. Crosses stage and walks about.*) Jack, I am waiting for you to pass judgment upon my appearance.

JACK

You are the most beautiful woman in the world.

RHODA

Oh, Jack, my gown—don't you notice anything unusual about it?

JACK

No—no.

RHODA

Do women usually wear décolleté gowns in the afternoon? Of course they don't. How can you be so unobserving? What a waste of time for us women to prepare an elaborate trousseau.

seau. (*Sits on settee at left*) This is just home from the dressmaker's.

JACK (*crossing stage and sitting beside her*)

Confess, the elaborate gowns are provided to startle your women friends.

RHODA

We try to dress becomingly for the benefit of you men, Jack.

JACK

One woman always succeeds, dear. Tell me your latest news of Babette.

RHODA

Oh, Jack, wasn't I wise to send her away during our wedding preparations? Her incessant prattle distracted me. I wanted every moment for you. A letter came this afternoon from sister; I haven't opened it yet. I can imagine its contents; Louise's letters are so monotonous. "Babette is a dream in her new frock—Babette has learned another word—Babette prays every night for her beautiful mother."

JACK

To love is to pray; so you see, Babette and I are always praying for you. I once asked Babette if she included me in her prayers.

RHODA

Of course she does; I have taught her to do it. What did she say?

JACK

"Baby p'ays for evibody."

RHODA (*throwing her arms around his neck*)

Rhoda prays only for Jack.

JACK (*reprovingly*)

And for Babette?

RHODA

Only for Jack.

CLOTILDE (*entering from boudoir, dressed for the street. She starts back in surprise*)

Pardonnez, madame; pardonnez, monsieur! Shall it please madame zat I shall now go to ze shop?

JACK (*rising*)

Is Clotilde going out in this blizzard?

RHODA (*indifferently*)

Yes.

JACK

Pardon my interference, but—is this errand so important—?

RHODA

Clotilde must go, blizzard or no blizzard.

(CLOTILDE starts up stage.)

JACK

Wait. Madame Duval will send a messenger.

CLOTILDE (*gratefully*)

Ah, monsieur, how good you—

JACK (*giving CLOTILDE a coin*)

Here, throw that quarter to the poor old frozen organ grinder.

(CLOTILDE attempts to thank him; he motions her off.)

CLOTILDE

Merci, monsieur. (*Goes into hallway.*)

RHODA (*rising and facing him angrily*)

What do you intend to do?

JACK

Telephone for a messenger.

RHODA

The wires are down; I must have the—

JACK (*going to her*)

The—what? You must have what? Tell me, dear.

RHODA

A—a—bottle of—Bouchet's hair wash.

JACK (*good-naturedly*)

Forgive me before I go?

RHODA (*with concern*)

Go? Go where?

JACK

I don't exactly know. What kind of shops sell—"Bouchet's hair wash"?

RHODA (*impulsively*)

Jack, you are not going to the hairdresser's.

JACK

Ah, the hairdresser's!

RHODA (*clinging to him*)

Jack, if anything should happen to you!

JACK

Nothing will happen, sweetheart, except that you will be supplied with hair tonic, blizzard or no blizzard.

RHODA (*pleadingly*)

Jack, I'm afraid to let you go. If—if we—could not be married tomorrow!—Jack, I love you better than all the world!—I love you better than my child!

JACK (*aghast. He gently draws her arms from his neck*)

Rhoda!

RHODA

Don't you want—all my love?

JACK (*passionately clasping her in his arms*)

Don't tempt me, Rhoda. The best of us are thieves when love is the spoil. Help me to be satisfied with my share of your love; don't tempt me to rob Babette of her share. Don't you understand—the best of us are thieves! (*He hurriedly goes out, taking hat and coat. RHODA stands as if stunned, her back to the audience.*)

CLOTILDE (*entering from hallway excitedly*)

Madame! Madame! It is tairrible! I throw ze money as monsieur say, and I see in ze street some children zat pick ashes from ze barrel of madame. La, la, la! Zey all fight for ze money, and a leetel girl she hit ze leetel boy and she get ze money. *Alors*, ze organ man and ze children zey fight. (*Goes to window. RHODA follows.*) Look! Look, madame! Zey fight! Zey fight!

RHODA

That naughty girl pushed the boy into the snowdrift. Go down and stop them, Clotilde. I will not have that vulgar fighting on my sidewalk.

CLOTILDE (*hysterically*)

Oui, oui, madame, I make ze children to be no more *si méchant*. Zere shall be no fights on ze sidewalk where live Madame Duval and *la petite* Babette. (*Goes out.*)

RHODA (*going to tea table*)

Babette! Babette! Everybody talks to me about Babette, even Jack—the dear boy will be coming back frozen and crying for a cup of tea. What did Clotilde do with the matches? Clotilde!—Pshaw, I can't wait; I'll get them myself. (*Hastily goes into boudoir.*)

(*A street organ is heard playing a popular air. MAGGIE enters from hallway. She is about twelve years old. She is pale, thin, half starved, half frozen. She is dressed in ragpicker style, ashes on her unkempt hair and tattered garments, and carries a bent poker and a battered tin pail. She is transfixed by the wealth and beauty of*

the surroundings. She looks about with delight and amazement, then goes down to settee and examines the satin sofa cushions. RHODA enters with a box of matches. She goes to tea table, strikes a match and lights spirit lamp. MAGGIE, on hearing the striking of the match, turns pugilistically, and stands aghast with admiration on discovering RHODA.)

MAGGIE

Gee whiz! Ain't she a peach!

RHODA (*going toward MAGGIE*)

Mercy, child, who are you?

MAGGIE

Maggie O'Rourke. (*She grasps RHODA's gown, smells the flowers on the skirt and steps away with disgust.*) Rats! Dem is fakes.

RHODA

How did you get up here?

MAGGIE

D'yer know dat foreign bloke wid de frills on her head wat lives on de foist floor? Well, she told me to quit me jarrin' and she'd gin me some soup. She hauled me into de kitchen and I gin her de slip, see? (*Puts pail on settee.*)

RHODA (*reclining in armchair near fire*)

Perhaps this is my rag doll sent to amuse me until Jack returns. Are you the rude little girl who pushed your playmate into the snowdrift?

MAGGIE

Come off! He ain't me playmate. Once't we wuz pards. I don't take none of his guff noways.

RHODA

Who is this boy?

MAGGIE

Jimmy Bloomstein. He lives tree floors under us. His nose got twisted up to de sky 'cause his dad's one of dem White Wing guys and wears a fixed up rig. Me dad works in a stable; he don't wear no rig. Dad and me's got me mudder and five o' us kids to work fur. I was lookin' fur a pard wid a cart. Jimmy's got one his big brudder made wid a soap box and de wheels off a busted baby kerridge, so I gin him a bluff 'bout de dough in me biz and he hitched himself wid me.

RHODA

What is your business?

MAGGIE

Haulin' kindlin' wood from new buildin's. (*Waves the poker in RHODA's face.*) Say, lady, ain't yer never seed me doin' yer ash can? I seed yer go kerridge ridin' ebry day.

RHODA

No, I have never noticed you. You come every day?

MAGGIE (*examining cheval glass and admiring her reflection*)

Yer bet I does. Dere's more solid coals in yer ash can dan in all de udders on de block.

RHODA

I shall see that the cook's wastefulness is stopped.

MAGGIE

We'd 'a' frizzed' fore now if ye'd been stingy like de udder guys.

RHODA

Tell me about yourself and your—pard.

MAGGIE (*indignantly*)

Jimmy Bloomstein ain't me pard. 'Cause his dad's a White Wing don't cut no more ice, see? I hates cheats. I cracked him in de slats and told him so.

RHODA

He cheated you?

MAGGIE (*raking contents of trunk with poker*)

Naw! Jimmy Bloomstein don't cheat Maggie O'Rourke. Say, 'twuz a cinch; he ain't got no grit. Gee whiz! Ye'd ought to seed a scrap 'tween me and Delia Harrigan. She swopped me a skate fur a chunk of tar and a jumpin' jack widout de jump. I found it in yer can de day our baby foist come. (*pugilistically*) Say, I only skated on dat skate once't and de bloomin' wheels bust off. I gin her hell. (*She pulls out of trunk on end of poker a small shawl, which she rolls in a bundle and places on settee.*)

RHODA

Maggie! What are you doing?

MAGGIE

Pickin' over de rubbish.

RHODA

My trousseau! Maggie, how dare you! How dare you touch my things? Come here, Maggie; come here by the fire.

(MAGGIE *reluctantly leaves trunk, goes to fireplace and sits on fur rug. She is attracted by the brass appointments on the hearth; during the following speeches she substitutes her poker for the brass one.*)

RHODA

Tell me how Jimmy tried to cheat you.

MAGGIE (*nestling close to fire*)

Gee, ain't dere lots of fire here!

RHODA

You have not answered my question. How did Jimmy cheat—try to cheat you?

MAGGIE (*with disdain*)

Ah, wat's dat to you?

RHODA

Very well, if you don't want to tell me— (*Attempts to rise. MAGGIE boisterously reaches across to RHODA and catches her gown.*)

MAGGIE

Hold on; don't git mad. But I wants yer to understand I don't allus tells me business to nosey hairpins.

RHODA (*rising*)

Don't touch my gown, Maggie; your hands are not clean. (*Goes to settee, picks up pail with the tips of her fingers, puts it on floor and sits.*)

MAGGIE (*examining her hands*)

Dey's as clean as dey allus is. (*Gazes into the fire.*) Dey ain't no cleaner when I holds de baby.

RHODA (*watching the child with patronizing interest.*)

Perhaps my rag doll is not stuffed entirely with rags.

MAGGIE

Dis is how it wuz: Me and Jimmy fixed it up dat I wuz to git de stray dough wat come our way, and he side-tracked from de 'greement.

RHODA

Why should you get all the money?

MAGGIE

'Cause Jimmy's de youngest of eleven kids, and some on dem works, so his mudder don't need de dough so much wat my mudder do. I's de oldest of five kids, and me and dad takes care o' de push. Me brudder Johnny'd be in biz wid me if he hadn't losted his leg chasin' a ice cart.

RHODA (*with revulsion*)

Maggie! Don't tell me such horrible things! (*The street organ is heard outside.*)

MAGGIE

Jimmy wuz to git all de busted umbrellas and de bottles wat wuzn't cracked, and we wuz to divvy on de paper boxes wid covers. Dat's all right, but just 'fore I come in dis flat a guy chucked a quarter out de winder and Jimmy grabbed it and tried to pinch it. (*Removes her shoe and produces coin exultantly.*) Dat's how Jimmy Bloomstein don't cheat Maggie O'Rourke.

RHODA

That is not your money, Maggie; it was thrown to the organ man.

MAGGIE (*staring at RHODA with blank astonishment*)

De—organ man?

RHODA

Yes. (*MAGGIE replaces coin, puts on shoe, then rises and takes pail.*) Are you going?

MAGGIE

Yep, to gin de quarter to de Dago.

RHODA (*rising and going to window*)

Why not throw it to him from the window? (*Draws heavy curtains, opens window and shivers.*) Br—r—r—r!

MAGGIE (*taking coin from shoe and throwing it*)

Say, dat's a cinch all right. (*Leans out of window.*) Hie, dere, Dago, git on to de job! Here's a quarter comin' your way! Hie, git out of dere, freshy; dat's fur de Dago!

RHODA (*standing beside tea table watching MAGGIE*)

Rather interesting, my rag doll. Maggie, Maggie, close the window.

MAGGIE (*meditatively*)

P'raps dat Dago's got a kid, too, wat's hungry.

RHODA

I will give you a cup of tea in a moment.

MAGGIE (*emphatically*)

Jimmy Bloomstein wuz two tiefs. He swiped off de Italian and all de time he tought he wuz pinchin' de quarter off me. (*Street organ plays latest popular song.*) Say, lady, ain't yer got a kid?

RHODA

Y-yes.

MAGGIE

Where is it?

RHODA

In the country near a city called Boston.

MAGGIE (*rapturously*)

De country? I seed pictoors of de country. Ain't it like Central Park, only bigger?

RHODA

Yes.

MAGGIE

Once't I wuz to Central Park. (*Hums song which is being played by street organ.*)

RHODA

It is a performing rag doll. Do you know that song?

MAGGIE

Sure.

RHODA

Won't you sing it for me?

MAGGIE

Dat's easy. (*Sings one verse and part of chorus, then stops abruptly.*) Say, lady, why ain't yer in de country wid yer kid?

RHODA

Finish the song.

(*MAGGIE sings chorus, but stops suddenly, having discovered scuttle of coal on the hearth; she dashes to fireplace, drops on floor beside scuttle and begins to fill her pail with coal piece by piece.*)

RHODA (*angrily, as she hears the noise of the dropping coal*)

Maggie, what are you doing?

MAGGIE

Pickin' some coal fur me mudder.

RHODA

You are stealing.

MAGGIE

Stealin'? (*Rises.*) Stealin', did yer say?—I ain't!—I ain't! Pickin' coal is me biz. How's us to live if we don't pick up wat we sees? . . . Stealin'! . . . Stealin'! (*With fury she approaches RHODA, thrusting her clenched fists into RHODA's face.*) Guess yer lookin' fur a scrap. . . . All right . . . come on, softy; it won't take more dan a jiffy to fix yer kind. . . . Come

on . . . come on! . . . Say, is yer 'fraid?

RHODA (*putting her hand on MAGGIE appeasingly*)

Maggie, Maggie, for shame!

MAGGIE (*enraged*)

Take yer paws off me, yer fixed up hairpin! Stealin', wuz I? How'd yer like it if yer own kid wuz frizzed and hungry and yer did some pickin' fur her and a guy told yer 'twuz stealin'? (*Goes to settee, takes shawl which she had left there in a roll, and throws it at RHODA.*) Dere, take dat! S'pose yer wants de cinders me and Jimmy picked from yer bloomin' ash can! (*Goes to fireplace, empties coals from her pail into scuttle and exchanges pokers.*) We'd gin 'em back if dey wuzn't burnt. (*Goes to RHODA defiantly.*) If yer kid's in de class wid her sassy mudder, she ain't in mine, see? . . . Stealin'! Stealin'!

RHODA

Maggie! Maggie, you are behaving in a very vulgar manner; listen to me—

MAGGIE (*trying to free herself from*

RHODA)

Leave me go!

RHODA

Not in such a temper.

MAGGIE

I tell yer, leave me go!

RHODA

Come, Maggie, behave yourself and I'll give you a cup of tea.

MAGGIE

Naw, quit! I don't want yer tea!

RHODA

Oh, yes, you do. Aren't you hungry?

MAGGIE (*becoming suddenly calm*)

Hungry? . . . Me hungry? . . .

Dat don't cut no ice. I . . . I ain't so hungry wat she is (*threateningly*). If . . . if she dies it's yer fault. (*Throws herself on floor, weeping noisily.*)

RHODA

If who dies?

MAGGIE (*sobbing*)

De baby, our kid. She took de scarlet fever and de sawbones told dad she hadn't oughter relapse. . . . She done it . . . and . . . she lost both her eyes. . . . And we ain't got no

fire . . . and she's . . . hungry. . . . (*Bursts into a spasm of weeping.*)

RHODA (*helping MAGGIE to rise and leading her to armchair*)

Get up, child. Don't cry. Both her eyes? Do you mean she is blind?

MAGGIE (*with a hysterical sob*)

Dat's wat I said, blind in de eyes.

RHODA

How old is your little sister?

MAGGIE (*sobbing convulsively*)

Two years . . . Saint Patrick's Day.

RHODA

Two years! . . . Babette's age. Horrible! And you are taking the shawl to wrap around the little blind baby?

MAGGIE

Sure. And de coals wuz fur de kid, too, and de quarter till I knowed it b'longed to de Dago. (*Cries louder.*)

RHODA (*giving MAGGIE tea and a plate of cakes*)

Don't cry any more, Maggie. Drink the tea.

MAGGIE (*taking cup and saucer*)

Wish der baby had dis tea.

RHODA

Here are some cakes . . . don't take them all; I expect another hungry visitor soon. On your way out stop in the kitchen for the soup my maid promised you. I will fetch a pencil and write down your address and send it to the Charity Organization. (*Goes into boudoir.*)

MAGGIE (*drinking and eating greedily. She rises and places cup on mantel*)

Gee whiz, Delia Harrigan'd have one on me if she seed me snivelin'. (*Discovers man's photograph.*) Jiminy, ain't he a scorch! (*Takes child's photograph and walks about stage.*) Dat's her kid. S'pose yer don't never remember seein' me, does yer, kid? When yer went kerridge ridin dose sashes wuz tied 'round yer so tight dey pulled yer nose up to de sky, so yer didn't seed me. I wuz dere, too, kid, behind yer ash can. Yer mudder washes yer clothes good; dey allus looks white. But she don't git 'em out on de roof de foist one, just de same! I wouldn't swop mudders. Yer had a

nerve to sneak off to de country. Why didn't yer took yer mudder wid yer? She's mad 'cause yer didn't. Guess she'll gin yer a picnic when yer comes back. When I told her 'bout me blind sister she looked like she wanted to bawl; guess she wuz thinkin' 'bout you. (*Replaces photograph on mantel.*) Ye'd better come back to yer mudder, kid. (*Stares at photograph with pathetic longing.*) Gee whiz, wish our baby had eyes like youn!

RHODA (*entering from boudoir with paper and pencil*)

Where do you live, Maggie?

MAGGIE (*discovering doll on mantel*)

Wat's dat?

RHODA

A rag doll.

MAGGIE

Ain't never seed one.

RHODA

Babette, my little girl, is absurdly fond of that old doll.

MAGGIE

Den why didn't she took it to de country wid her?

RHODA

Answer my question—where do you live?

MAGGIE (*replacing doll on mantel*)

1932 Tinth Avaner; nint' floor.

RHODA (*writing*)

"Maggie O'Rourke, 1932 Tenth Avenue"—is that right?

MAGGIE (*taking poker and pail*)

Sure. I'm goin' now; so long!

RHODA

Wait a moment. (*Takes pail from MAGGIE, goes to fireplace and puts paper containing address on mantel. She fills pail with coal from scuttle.*) You must carry your pail home full of coal.

MAGGIE (*decisively*)

Naw! I ain't goin' to swipe yer stuff.

RHODA

I am giving it to you this time. You may have the doll, too.

MAGGIE

Naw!

RHODA

Perhaps your little sister would like it.

(MAGGIE is unable to resist this inducement; she snatches doll from RHODA and faces her defiantly.)

MAGGIE

If yer kid gives me any guff 'bout pinchin' her doll, I'll crack her to blazes.

RHODA

Maggie, Maggie, hush! Here is your pail of coal.

MAGGIE

Forget it!

RHODA

You must take it (MAGGIE shakes her head negatively) to your mother—to your brothers and sisters—to the little blind baby! (MAGGIE snatches pail.) You may come to see me again; will you?

MAGGIE

Sure! Tomorrow.

RHODA

No, I am going away tomorrow.

MAGGIE (*enthusiastically*)

To see yer kid?

RHODA (*picking up shawl and putting it over MAGGIE's head*)

Oh, you are forgetting the shawl. This is to wrap around the little blind baby. (*Holds MAGGIE's face between her hands.*) Au revoir, my rag doll!

(MAGGIE stares at RHODA and tries to speak. Then she boisterously throws her arms around RHODA's neck. The coal is spilled and the doll falls to the floor. During the following speech she picks up the coal, but the doll escapes her notice.)

RHODA

Go home now, Maggie. I am waiting for another visitor.

MAGGIE

A gent?

RHODA (*at fireplace, looking at man's photograph*)

Yes.

MAGGIE

Oh, him! I'll bring 'long de baby de next time I comes. Hope him will be home den. (*Goes up stage.*) Say, yer kid's got a lead pipe cinch all right wid dat crackerjack fur her dad. So long! (*Goes out through hallway.*)

RHODA (*addressing man's photograph*)
My rag doll has fallen in love with you, Jack. . . . Blind! . . . Blind and

hungry—and cold. . . . I wonder if Babette's last winter's coat—Babette! (*Snatches letter from mantel.*) Sister's letter! (*Eagerly, silently reads first page, then continues to read aloud.*)—"Symptoms have developed of the worst form of scarlet fever." (*She gasps and staggers as if struck by a blow.*) The blind baby had scarlet fever! (*Continues to read.*) "Come at once. Babette is having the best of care, but there is great danger for her sight." . . . Her—sight! Babette, you shall not be blind! (*Calls.*) Clotilde! Clotilde! (*with self-aborrence.*) The little ragpicker braves the storm to seek food and fuel for her dear ones—while I—I—Clotilde! Clotilde! (*Discovers doll on floor; picks it up and presses it to her face.*) The rag doll!

CLOTILDE (*entering from hallway*)
Madame calls?

RHODA
Pack my valise. I am going to Boston.

CLOTILDE (*with surprise*)
Mon Dieu, madame, shall you go to-day?

RHODA
I am going at once, alone.

CLOTILDE
But, Monsieur Spencer?
RHODA (*indicating paper on mantel*)
Give this paper to Mr. Spencer. Tell him to go to that address at once, to spare no expense in relieving that starving family.

CLOTILDE
But madame will wait to see monsieur?

RHODA
I shall wait for nothing. I am going to take the rag doll to Babette. My valise, at once. Do you hear what I am saying to you, Clotilde? My valise, now!

CLOTILDE (*going toward boudoir*)
Tout de suite, madame. (*Taps her head significantly.*) La, la, la! *L'amour* has strike ze head of madame! (*Goes out.*)

(RHODA continues to hold letter and doll. She removes flowers from her gown and takes off jewelry.)

JACK (*entering quickly from hallway*)
Here we are, Jack Frost and I. I have bad news for you, sweetheart.

RHODA (*rushing to him apprehensively*)
About Babette?

JACK
About the hair tonic. Madame Bouchet is sold out, but—

RHODA
Jack, I have read sister's letter. Babette has scarlet fever. She may go blind. Blind, do you hear, Jack, blind! (*Pleadingly.*) Say you are *sure* there is enough God-love in the world to save my baby!

JACK
Tell me everything your sister says.

RHODA
Here is her letter. Don't read it now, Jack; you haven't time.

JACK
What do you intend to do?

RHODA
Do? I am going to Babette.

JACK
We are going.

RHODA
No, not you. Don't ask any questions now. Clotilde has a message for you. I shall not be back until Babette is well.

JACK (*with surprise and reproach*)
Rhoda! Tomorrow is our wedding day!

RHODA (*dazed*)
I—had—forgotten.

JACK
We will be married in Boston.

RHODA
You cannot go with me, Jack; the blind baby needs you here.

JACK
What do you mean?

RHODA
I will tell you on the way to the station; you will see me off, won't you? (*JACK starts up stage.*) Where are you going?

JACK
To hunt a cab. They may all be snow-bound—

RHODA
Then I'll walk. (*Goes to him and puts her arms around his neck.*) Jack, this

terrible thing wouldn't have happened to Babette if I had prayed for *her*, too, would it? But I'll begin tonight. I'll pray for her tonight.

JACK (*kissing her reverently*)

A mother's love is prayer; you are praying for her now. (*Goes out through hallway.*)

(RHODA starts for boudoir, but stops on hearing MAGGIE's voice off.)

MAGGIE (*off*)

Lady! Lady! (*Enters from hallway and looks about room as if in search of something.*) Lady, did yer see dat doll yer gin me fur de kid? (RHODA quickly conceals doll behind her back.) Guess it dropped on de stairs and some guy in de udder flats swiped it.

RHODA

Perhaps.

MAGGIE

I'd gin 'em hell if I ketched de bloke wat pinched de doll off de blind baby.

RHODA (*hastily goes to Maggie and throws her arms about her passionately*)

Never mind, darling; never mind. I will send your little blind sister the most beautiful doll I can find. (*Takes MAGGIE's face between her hands and kisses her.*) Good-bye, good-bye, my rag doll! (*Goes into boudoir overcome with emotion. She is careful that MAGGIE does not see doll as she takes it out of the room.*)

MAGGIE

Bet she's snivelin' fur her kid. Dat's all right, but it don't cut no ice wid her callin' me names. (*Shakes her fist toward boudoir.*) I—I ain't no rag doll!

CURTAIN.



A SONG OF LOST GIFTS

By THEODOSIA GARRISON

THE years we spent together—what are they
But blown dust on the wastes of yesterday?

Yet, should I find my joy, I must go back,
Seeking its fragments where the gray years stay.

Who knows what ghost may come the selfsame track,
Wistful, for that his live hand cast away?

The dream we dreamed together—it is gone
Like some frail rose a great wind falls upon,

Destroying utterly. Yet I, in truth,
Would give all golden gardens 'neath the sun
For one torn petal from that rose of youth,
And nowhere may I find one—nay, not one.

Perchance that happiness we have not known
Love now bestows on other lovers grown

More worthy of a gift left unpossessed.
Those vagabonds met there beneath the blown
May moon tonight, may wear within each breast
The joy divine that might have been our own.

THE MERCY OF SAN JUAN

By LUCIA CHAMBERLAIN

ON the church steps, a few feet from where I waited in my saddle, an old man sat huddled, his hands on his knees, his blinking eyes staring away into the gathering dusk. His face was withered into innumerable wrinkles, the hands shrunken, the form shapeless. Old Father Time himself would have looked young beside him. He held his battered *sombrero* between his knees, and while I debated whether this was by accident or purpose, and hesitated over a donation, Miguel came out at the Padre's door, and, to my surprise, lifted his hat to the old fellow as though he were a grandee, and spoke a smiling "*Buenas noches.*"

As we cantered away among the trees I asked, "Who is your friend, Miguel?"

"Him on the step?" The Mexican raised inquiring brows. "That ol' Vaquez. The Padre take care of him. He olest man in Southern California."

"How old, Miguel?"

"How much you think, señor?"

"Eighty?"

"Eighty!" Miguel's accent betrayed polite scorn. "Anyone can live so long as that. That Vaquez, he is hundred and five last April. I think he live forever!"

"A hundred and five! Oh, come!"

"It is so!" the *vaquero* protested, "but not every man can live so long as that. It is very strange, the reason he live so long," said Miguel, and relapsed into sententious silence. He did dearly love to dally with my curiosity.

We passed the orchard wall, where the olive leaves glistened silver below the red tiled mission roofs, and cantered

away over the bare, rolling country, following the long white way that doubled among low hills and dipped into hollows, leading us on to the *rancho* on the river that was our journey's end.

"How about the old chap, Miguel? You were going to tell me how he happened to live so long."

Miguel shook himself. "Oh, that Vaquez? I think he come live so long just for he want go die so hard. Eh, señor, is it not so?"

Neck and neck, at a lagging gait, we cantered away the miles, while the reluctant night came in upon us through the ravines. The croak of frogs was hoarse and strong in the low ground; the crickets were shrill on the long rises. A coyote howled from the hills and, as at a signal, Miguel, rising in his stirrups, pointed on before him.

"Look, señor," he said.

Shade my eyes and stare as I would, I could see only a grassy divide, with a grove of eucalyptus like a dark blot in the hollow of the hill. "What is it, Miguel? I see nothing but trees and moonlight."

"Look, señor, where the old fence stops halfway down the divide, where the gum trees come out to meet it. No, it is not a shadow there. Señor, that is what was the Rancho Las Animas. You hear that wolf? It is a house for wolves now. Long time ago it was a house for men."

Miguel sank back in his saddle once more. "I show you that *rancho* long way off, because I want tell you of this place while we are coming to it. Señor, you ask how this Vaquez come live so very old. Now I tell you.

"Eighty years ago, long time, when all California is nothing but Spanish there is a man named Vaquez Delegherra come down to San Juan and build that *hacienda* up in the hills, make it big and strong, and call it 'Rancho Las Animas.' The Padre say to him, 'Vaquez, why don't you call him "Rancho Los Vaqueros"?' Delegherra say, very polite, 'Padre, there are so many ghosts here there is no room for men.' He build that house, and then he give the gr-r-rand party. All these *hidalgos*, they come to his house. And, señor, you know, every girl that see him love that man! All these girls, they jus' mad 'bout him! He is not so tall, not so handsome, but he have the big black eye, the small white hand, the very sweet way to speak. If he order a *vaquero* to hang, if he ask a señorita to dance, it is the same—very sweet.

"He live in this house little while by himself. Then one day he go up to San José and when he come back he bring his wife with him. She is a pretty girl. I think she is some Mexican, maybe some little Indita, but she is very pretty. No woman in San Juan have such little feet, such black eyes. But her hair is not black, it is red like copper.

"Delegherra love her, not like he love the saints, on his knees; he love her mad, crazy! What you think? She never love him at all. What for you think she marry him? She marry him because all the other girls want marry him too. She have a lover more rich in Vallejo; she have one more handsome in San José. But she marry Vaquez Delegherra just that he is great grandee, and all the other girls like marry him too. Now how you think of that? I don't like that way. But Vaquez think of course she love him—he never find any girl yet that don't—so for a while that is all right.

"He bring her down to Las Animas and keep her there very close. She never come to San Juan but to mass and confession. She never go to the big party at the other *hacienda*. All

the time that Delegherra ride and dance and make the sweet talk to the señoritas she stay at the *hacienda*. And one day she send out to the Padre and say, 'Where can I find good gardener?' My gran'father is a gardener; make the fine garden at Santa Barbara, so the Padre send him out to the Rancho Las Animas to make the garden for the Señora Delegherra.

"She tell him what she want done. She walked around with him in the *patio* and show him. And when the beds are finished she help him plant the seed. She stand and watch him dig. She look very little, very young, very sad. My gran'father say he feel bad for her, she look so lonely. But, come spring, she begin to smile. She get a dimple in the cheek, rose in the hair. She follow my gran'father round while he work in the garden, and sometime she talk to him.

"'My husband,' she say, 'like a garden of coyotes and owls. I think I like azaleas better.' And she laugh like a child.

"Then come the *fiesta*, the holy day for San Juan. The people come. They come from 'way other side of the river—from the coast, all these fine *hidalgos*, all these *rancheros*; and Delegherra come, and bring his wife with him. After the church is over everyone go into the *plaza* to see the games. The *caballeros* ride *vaquero*. They ride, and Vaquez ride the best one. He pick up the chicken every time, and every time he give it to the Señorita Romilda Borassa. Señora Delegherra sit still, bite the stem of her rose and smile a little.

"Then music begin on the big floor under the grapevines, very fine music, from Paso Robles! The leader, Gabriel Ferrere, they call him, play the violin. He sit there in his chair and he make the fiddle talk and sing. He don't roll his eyes all round at the girls. He don't smile at anyone. He just smile like to himself, and listen to his fiddle talk. Then the Señora Delegherra come up on the floor and it look like everyone want dance with her. She have a lace *mantilla* over her head, and

big rose, red like her mouth. She stand there, the music just ready to begin, when this fiddler, this Ferrere, look up and see her. She look right at him and bite the stem of her rose. He lift up his fiddle to his chin and begin a waltz, "Las Más Bonitas de las Todas," and the señora dance away with the han'somest *caballero* on the floor. She dance like a thistle in the wind; and he half close his eyes and watch her round the room. When she dance with her husband, when she dance with the Alcalde, when she dance with anybody, he look like he can't stop look, and he make that fiddle laugh and cry. Look like she don't dance to the music. He make that music dance to her.

"When they call the last dance Ferrere get up, put down his bow, go over to where the Señora Delegherra stand with the Alcalde. Ferrere, he is very tall, with blue eyes. He walk all loose, what you call—'slipshod,' but he make the fine bow, like he is grandee, and say, 'Señora, may I have the honor?' like that, and he don't know her at all! She put her rose in her mouth and dance away with him, just as Delegherra come up. Well, señor, they dance; and all the time Ferrere dance he keep singing with the guitars, and he sing more sweet than he fiddle, and he smile all the time like *diablo*. Just as the music go to stop he swing her off her feet and say something quick, that make her cheek come r-r-red. The guitars go 'bom!' and it is the end. Ferrere lead her up to where her husband stand, kiss her hand, make the grand bow to Delegherra and go away in the crowd.

"Then it is night, and Señor Delegherra take his wife to the Alcalde's house to the big ball he give the *hidalgos*, and Ferrere sit under the grape arbor where the people dance all night, and make his fiddle cry to the moon. Next day all the people that come to San Juan for the *fiesta* go home. Everyone go but this Gabriel Ferrere. He stay. He take little room in Sanchez Hotel, and he sit at the window all day, look out at the sky and the locust trees, and play his fiddle like he dream.

And, come night, if he don't go to play for dance somewhere, he sit outside with a guitar, and sing till the children come to listen. He never work, never do anything but fiddle and drink in Sanchez bar. He very lazy, more slow, have his eyes half shut all the time like asleep. Everyone think they know why he stay in San Juan, and first they look at each other and laugh. But when Ferrere never do anything but play his fiddle and sit round Sanchez they laugh 'nother way. And when he sit in the door with his guitar in the evening the girls call to him and say:

"'Gabriel Ferrere, is it too far, Las Animas?'"

"And he smile and say, 'Mis adores, I love not *las animas*. I love *las señoritas*.'"

"And when the young *vaqueros* look sideways at him and say:

"'Gabriel Ferrere, it is too near, maybe, Las Animas?' he smile and say. 'You are very near *las animas*. I will meet you when you like.' But the only man that meet him go to '*las animas*' that night.

"Well, maybe it is a month from the *fiesta*, there is a dinner at Hacienda Las Animas to the Alcalde of San Diego. The Señor Delegherra have hear how fine Ferrere play. I don't know if he hear anything else about him; but he send for him to come with three others to play for them at the dinner. Then the people laugh, say, 'Ho, this Ferrere, he will run away quick!' But he jump on his black mustang and ride off to Las Animas with his fiddle under his arm, like he is very glad. My gran'-father is there, looking at the dinner through the curtain, and he say Ferrere play like his heart is in the string, till they stop eat to listen. Only the señora, she don't listen much. She talk soft at the Alcalde. She smile at her husband. She don't look at Ferrere much, and he never see her at all.

"When the *caballeros* begin drink Delegherra lead the señora to the door by the tip of the fingers, kiss her hand, and she go away. The musicians go to drink downstairs, and Ferrere swallow

one glass raw brandy and say, 'One moment; I am very hot,' and step out into the court. There is a wall with an old olive tree against it. See, señor, there is the tree still."

We were well abreast the Rancho Las Animas, and the old olive stood against the pale hillside like a dark skeleton. A black dot moved under it. The coyote laugh came with startling distinctness.

"Then my gran'father think it is good time to see if his moonflowers bloom all right. He go through the house—run quick—and come out into the *patio* by the basement door. Just as he come out he see a man sit on top of the wall, all black against the moon. Then he come sliding down through the grapevine, and stoop, and creep in the bushes on his hands and knees; and so he come over by the house under the señora's window, and pick up a little stone from the path. Right there the señora walk out of the verbena trees behind him. She wear a white dress, and come so sudden, like a ghost, my gran'father make haste to cross himself. She step up behind Ferrere, where he kneel, so soft he never hear her, and put her hands on his shoulders. He whirl around, his hand on his knife, and see her. He sit back on his knees and say, '*Mitad de mi vida! Mi corazon!*' like that.

"When he speak so seem she can't say anything. She is dumb. She get red. She get white like the dead. She say, 'What you doing here, fiddler? Do you know what Delegherra do if he find you?' He answer, 'Delegherra does not find me.' And he put his arms around her knees where he sit in the grass, and say, 'I love you, I love you, I love you!' She break through his hands and run to the other side of the fountain. 'What do you?' she say, and hold her head up. 'I don't know you. You just nothing but a common fiddler.' 'I am the master fiddler,' say Ferrere. 'You dance to my music at the *fiesta*, you dance my heart out of my body! And you have been thinking of me ever since.'

"She look down into the water, and

he come up behind her and put his hands over hers quick, before she can take them away. She say, 'Don't touch me!' and begin to cry. He never move. He say—'*Mi niña*, what are you afraid of?' 'I am afraid you don't love me,' she say, and shake like a white birch. He take her by the chin and turn her face up to his—so. He say, 'That is the last lie you will ever tell me. You know I love you. You know that I love you when you look at me so at the *fiesta* las' month. I love you more than this whole earth. It is all your fault, and what you going to do about it?'

"'I am going to send you far away,' she say, still looking down into the water.

"'Si,' he answer. 'You going to send me far away, and you going to send yourself with me.'

"'No, no, no!' she say. 'It is impossible!' But she hold him like she fall if she let go.

"'I'll put you on my horse,' he say. 'I take you away with me, hundred miles into the mountains. Inez, Inez, I shall take you away!'

"She only shake her head. 'I am afraid!'

"'Of me?' he say.

"'Of my husband,' she whisper.

"And he put his arms around her and laugh, and say, 'Your husband! Your husband is drunk under the table tonight, and tomorrow we will be in the mountains. We will not have any husbands to frighten you, not ever, ever!' And then Gabriel Ferrere kiss the Señora Delegherra on the mouth. My gran'father see him do it.

"Señor, right there, *diablo!* step out of the garden door—Vaquez Delegherra. He think first he see two people. Then he think he see one. Then the señora see him. She say, 'Run!' and pull away from Ferrere. Then Delegherra see! It come on him like what you call 'thunderbolt.' But before he can move the señora jump on his neck like a cat and throw her *mantilla* over his face. He tear her off and throw her on the ground, but when he can see there is no one there.

"He run to the wall. He run up and down at the foot of the wall, but he can't climb it. He run back to where the señora is on the ground and drag her up. 'Who is he?' he whisper. He so angry he can't speak out loud.

"She wipe the blood off her face and laugh at him. 'I will never tell you,' she say.

"'Tell me before I kill you,' he say. He is mad—crazy.

"She get away from him and run to the chapel. He catch her at the altar, hold the knife at her throat. She is frightened. She scream.

"'Tell me before I send you to hell!' he say.

"She hold San Juan around the knees and say, 'Never, never!' And while she pray San Juan save her Delegherra stab her in the back. Then he hold up the knife and say, 'San Juan, I pray you never let me die until I kill that man!' And my gran'father see San Juan bend his head to Vaquez Delegherra!

"And, señor, this Vaquez walk into his house where they are at dinner, like nothing happen, and ask, 'Who is gone away?' The only man that is not there is Ferrere the fiddler. When Delegherra find that out he get gray in the face. He say, '*Caballeros, la señora* is very sick. Excuse me.'

"When they are gone he go back to the chapel, and for two hours he keep the doors shut. When he come out there is nothing there. Come morning, Delegherra get on a pony, take all his *vaqueros*, ride out over the country all day, look for this Ferrere, but no one seen him. He has gone out of sight. Delegherra go back to the Hacienda Las Animas and send away all the servants—not one left. He shut up his house and go away. He leave the horses on the *mesa*; the *rancheros* take the cattle on the hills. He go away and never say anything to anyone, not even the Padre. He go away, and everywhere he hunt this Gabriel Ferrere, over to the coast, and south to San Diego, and in the Santa Ana mountains. They hear of him, that he come to Los Angeles, Santa Barbara, San Buena-

ventura. Everyone know Vaquez Delegherra, and give him the big time where he go, and he don't say anything. He go everywhere, but all the time he look, look for Ferrere the fiddler. Then one day he come home. He look very han'some, very fine, very thin. He has had a big time, but he has not find what he look for. The Padre go to speak to him. He say, 'Vaquez Delegherra, have you found peace?' And Delegherra answer, 'I have not found Ferrere.'

"The Padre say, 'May San Juan have mercy on your soul.'

"'Si, he does,' Delegherra answer, stick spur into his mustang and ride away to Las Animas. He only stay little while. I think he find more ghosts in Las Animas when he come back than when he go away. And the coyotes sit in the court and laugh up at his windows. He go off, and it is five years before he come back again. He is very thin, all eyes; and they burn and twinkle like candles when the wind blow them. His clothes they hang on him all loose. The Padre go to him at Sanchez Hotel, where he stay.

"'How is it with you, Vaquez?' he ask.

"Delegherra answer, 'I have not found Ferrere.'

"He say nothing to anyone; he never go near Las Animas. He stay a little while—he go away long time. When he come back again it is all different. The Padre is dead; the Alcalde is dead. Las Animas is shake to pieces in the big earthquake. The only man in San Juan that know him when he come back is my gran'father, Miguel Vincente. He say Señor Delegherra is an ol' man, look very poor. He stay one night's sleep at Sanchez. In the morning he go away. That night he come back again. Look like he can't keep still in one place. Then my gran'father go to the new Padre. He say to him, 'Everyone know who is Vaquez Delegherra, and what he do. Now he is come back to San Juan, and I think he is cr-r-razy.'

"The Padre go to see him; and when Vaquez see the black frock he think it is the father he know. He

look at him and say, 'I have not found Ferrere.'

"And the Padre answer, 'Why want find Ferrere?'"

"He say, 'I don't want. I only want to die. And I can't die until I kill Ferrere.'

"That is it, señor. The blessed San Juan, when Delegherra kill his wife in the sanctuary, he punish him that way. He can't die until he kill Ferrere. And why you think he never find that Ferrere? The Padre have learn this man die of the fever one month after Delegherra stab his wife.

"That is why he never can find him—

never can kill him. That is why he never can die. No, señor, the water won't drown him, fire won't burn him, steel won't stab him. He live! The Padre take care of him, and no one believe anything of this but me—that ol' Vaquez who sit there on the church step all day is Vaquez Delegherra, that make the Rancho Las Animas. He never talk—never speak anything. Only on the *fiesta* of San Juan, when they dance under the big grape arbor, he sit upon the stair, and when the fiddle begin he lean over, touch the Padre's knee, and say,

"Have you found Ferrere?'"



THE DUFFER

By CONSTANCE MORRIS

NINE little golf holes; bogie thirty-three;
Duffer badly tops his ball driving from the tee.

Eight little golf holes—first one cost eleven—
Buried in a bunker deep. Now there are seven.

Seven little golf holes. What an awful fix!
Three balls swimming in the brook. Now there are six.

Six little golf holes. When he tried to drive,
Sliced into the high grass. Now there are five.

Five little golf holes. Gracious, how he swore
As he dug the turf up! Now there are four.

Four little golf holes. Stymied by a tree,
Ball stuck in the branches! Now there are three.

Three little golf holes. Sphere just fairly flew;
But he missed a six inch putt. Now there are two.

Two little golf holes. In his face the sun,
Approaching, overran the green. Now there is one.

One little golf hole. Down a steep decline.
Driver's broken; ball is lost. Score is ninety-nine.

AN UNBIDDEN TENANT

By MINNIE BARBOUR ADAMS

IT was growing dark. I hitched my chair nearer to the window for the fourth—and last—time; for another would take me through it into a dreadful, rubbishy place that looked about an inch wide, it was so far below. Oh, dear! If only I could have another hour of light, I could finish the waist on which I'd been working so long, and take it back to the shop, which would mean cream puffs for supper. I'd had my eye on 'em for a week—of course, not the same ones, for they'd been eaten a dozen times—that is—I mean— Oh, gracious! what *do* I mean? Anyway, I'd seen the lovely "twofers," as a newsboy called 'em, and had promised myself a couple when I finished the waist.

Oh, well, I could have my faithful staff of—not life; existence merely—for supper, just as I had had three times a day for a week; hominy, done over and up in twenty-one different ways, which somehow sounds like pickles, but was nothing so appetizing. It would have to be hominy unadorned tonight, I thought sadly, for I didn't have so much as a grain of sugar or a—grease spot of butter left in the house—or, to be more accurate, the room; and nothing to do it up in unless I'd empty the quinine out of the capsules and take it in them. Come to think of it, I believed I'd rather take the quinine straight than the hominy, and was just wondering how many capsules it would take to appease that awful gnawing where I'm the narrowest, when a slight noise at the window of the house opposite made me look up.

A man—a big, exasperatingly well fed looking man—was standing in front

of it, eyes, teeth and—I think—mind intent on a peach he was eating. I didn't blame him, for if I'd one like it I wouldn't have recognized John D. on the street, not even if he'd been my Sunday school teacher.

"Oh, hang it all, Sam, put it where you please!" the man said over his shoulder, between bites. "What's that? You dare insinuate that I'd raise Cain, nevertheless, if it wasn't handy when I wanted it? Take that!" he roared in such an awful voice that my eyes nearly popped out of my head in their anxiety to see. "And that!" he boomed out, again throwing viciously, and I heard a soft impact against something back in the room. He reached for another missile, and I was getting all nice and shivery when he stopped, as a voice, the funniest, squeakiest one I ever heard, said:

"Thank you, sir, I can't eat more than two." And I saw it was peaches he was throwing.

He laughed such a jolly, catching laugh that I did too, and lost all the pins I'd been holding gingerly in the very outside corner of my mouth for fear of germs and things. During it all I hadn't missed a stitch; but it was now so dark that I kicked my chair out of the way and plumped down on the window sill, hoping to see a few minutes longer. But the smoky mist outside dropped a smudge of soot on my sleeve as a sample of what it would do to the embroidery if it got the chance, so I tossed it back on the bed out of harm's way, and took an inventory of cramps and aches in a jaw-splitting yawn.

The man still stood at the window, throwing remarks over his shoulder and

peach stones into the waste basket; and now he selected another, the biggest, homeliest one I'd seen since I left auntie's, and set his strong white teeth in it. It looked—and sounded—so good that I stopped short, with my arms over my head and my feet stretched as far away as they could possibly get, and my mouth, too, and stared greedily. So did he. Then—

I wonder what he saw! The bare little room was mercifully shrouded in gloom, my shabby habiliments likewise; so it must have been the peach longing, hominy loathing expression that he surprised in my eyes.

"Catch!" he said abruptly, and a peach came whizzing through the window. I picked it out of the atmosphere with the ease of a veteran ball player.

"Another!" he cried, and I took it with one hand as it passed me.

"Well, now, wouldn't that frost you!" he cried delightedly, and reached for another.

Then I did the horriest thing. I knew I ought not to take any more; and, before I thought, I said in a high, squeaky voice like that of the former peach recipient:

"Thank you, sir, I can't eat more than two."

He gave a shout of laughter, and would have thrown another; but I disappeared in the darkness, sizzling with anger at myself for my foolish mimicry, and with hunger as I patted the round, downy cheeks of my catch.

I divided the—ugh!—hominy, and resolutely put half of it and one peach aside for breakfast, though the hungry part of me kept insisting that I ought not to put off till tomorrow what could be done today; but I went right ahead and put the hominy on my one gas burner to warm while I peeled the other peach and set the table. Neither took very long, for the peelings came off in pretty pink curling ribbons, it was so ripe, and the dishes were as scarce as things to put in them.

I had carefully saved the trading stamps that had been given me with my few purchases, and had gotten a

plate and cup and saucer, covered with what looked to be curly lettuce and Brussels sprouts; and, while saving more tickets—which didn't come in very fast on hominy—was using the pin tray and the soap dish, which I'd scoured out. I now put part of the hom—Oh, gracious! If I say that word again I'll gag—*maize* in each, pretending one was just plain filling and the other dessert; and, really, it wasn't half bad. When my poor, agonized, clamoring stomach revolted at it the promise of a slice of peach appeased it; and when, at length, they were both out of sight I felt quite comfortable and content.

I had read somewhere that one can exist on very little food if one masticates thoroughly, and, of late, I had given about sixty chews to the swallow, which sounds vulgar, but is true; but tonight, with my tortured stomach shrieking for more, I found it quite difficult and often forgot to count beyond three.

As soon as I could, I put out the lamp to save kerosene, which I'd been using of late to save gas, and, pulling my chair near the window, put my feet on the suit case and leaned back. My goodness, but I was tired! How I wished I could have finished that waist! Still, it was a great consolation to know that my breakfast was assured, for, though the Bible says we are to take no thought of the morrow, as not a swallow falls unnoticed, of late not much attention had been paid to mine, it seemed. Maybe they had been so few and far between as to be not worth noticing; and, although for years I had kept auntie's hands and eyes in a prayerful attitude, wherever her mind was, I ought to be thankful for the training of my old baseball days. And I *was* thankful that the rooms opposite were tenanted at last. Since I had stayed in mine all the time those blank, expressionless windows had made me lonesome.

Lonesome! Heaven above! I was learning the full meaning of that innocent looking word. It used to mean a

rainy evening when auntie put her rheumatism to bed early on account of the damp, or the Sunday when the town had all gone to the basket meeting—mostly basket—and I'd had to stay at home on account of that same rheumatism. Of course I could always write, which robbed the loneliness of much of its sting; in fact, I believe if I'd looked closer, I'd often found the letters spelled content, instead. Auntie never cared how much I scribbled Sundays till I sold a story; but, after that, she objected to anything but epitaphs for the county papers or sad little poems on the same subject, and found a good many texts, as she called them, to bear her out.

I also sent in all the marriages, births, deaths and other accidents, which, with an occasional story in the magazines and my teaching, made me quite independent and the envy of all the girls. Then—Oh, I always have a gone feeling at the pit of my stomach when I think of it!—then the Old Boy, himself, in checked worsted instead of scales, with smiles and courtly bows instead of wiggles, invaded our Eden, and I swallowed the apple whole. It wasn't very big, but to my greedy, ambitious eyes it looked the size of a watermelon.

"Bah Jove! Such versatility—such an imagination—such a delicate humor—insight into human nature—unusual grasp—twiddle-te-de-dum!" till I believed that the big city editors were just crazy for such talents as mine.

Of course, when I came I'd look him up. The tender glance accompanying this made one feel that it would be a pleasure—and he'd put me onto the ropes and the editors.

I had no hope of going, though, and felt awfully sorry for the editors; and thought sadly of myself hiding under a bushel basket, or being wrapped up in a napkin like a hot roll. Then auntie's rheumatism, which had been lying dormant for a time, suddenly became active. I gave up my school; and when it had *me* worn down to a sliver her sister came to take a whirl

at the nursing, and, liking it—or us—so well, decided to stay indefinitely—or, maybe, interminably would be the better word.

Ah, here was my chance! "Teeming city" and "consuming pity," "busy mart" and "aching heart," with a little padding, fell naturally into line, also into the town paper, where it was spoken of as "a charming little poem by our rising young literary genius, Marjorie Day, so soon to," etc., etc.

The minister prayed for my safety, morally, in the great, ravening city, and I sniveled. Deacon Hodges advised great caution, and I sniffled. Parties were given in my honor; the brass band played on the station platform; tears and kisses were shed; handkerchiefs were waved, and I was adrift.

I would not bother T. Alexander Harrington at first. When I was nicely settled I might send him a little note with permission to call. I changed my mind, however, and did it myself when I had worn out two pairs of shoes and five weeks on the unfeeling editors, and my poor aching eyes had begun to see brick and asphalt instead of gold and precious stones.

I called. Oh, yes, I called; and I wish I hadn't, the horrid, leering beast! Then, feeling awfully alone and just a little scared, now that I no longer had T. Alexander up my sleeve, I went into Cohen's store at six per; and when they went broke I began to embroider blouses at home, or, rather, in my room. I had had the front room, too; but when I went into Cohen's I had given it up, thinking the little bedroom would do to sleep in. When I reached the embroidery stage I found it ample to work, sleep and eat hom—that is, prepared maize—in, though I was awfully squeezed, and the soap dish for a tureen was a fair sample of my other economies.

The view was quite charming though, when I had time to hook my feet around the bed legs so I could lean out and view it in comfort and safety—a slice of blue above about wide enough for a hair ribbon; a sliver of

red brick across the street with "***RUG STRO***" across its lower story; a confusion of clothes lines at the back—turkey-like, I never looked down. But I had neighbors now, peachy neighbors; and, hugging the comforting thought to my breast, I went to bed.

By nine o'clock I had finished the waist, and the peach with—its accompaniment; but, by the time I had made a list of what I wished to get with the money, and then had slashed and revised it into what I *must* have, the clocks were striking ten. I had been singing around all the forenoon, for I had found by this time that one can't think much when one's screeching like mad; and now, as I stood before the window, tying on my veil, my neighbor momentarily forgotten, I warbled shrilly something about "Solomon in all his glo—re—ee—"

"Lord save us!" cried an exasperated voice; and the man flung up the shade. "Why *do* you hiss 'glory' through your teeth? Look here! Sing it this way!" He opened his big mouth wide and sang the line, each word clear and distinct; high "glory" as full and round as low "Solomon"; and he didn't get red in the face nor stand on his tiptoes to get it, either, as I had done.

"Now try it!" he commanded; but I hadn't finished "Solomon" till he interrupted sharply, "Put up your veil!"

I did, and started again, but wasn't halfway up when he put in crossly:

"Put back your shoulders! Throw out your chest! How can you expect to sing with your lungs in a vise?"

I meekly folded my shoulder blades together and went ahead again; and this time I didn't stop when he shouted, his hands clutching his hair:

"Open—your—mouth! *Wider!* Misery and destruction! Throw up your head! You can't sing with your chin resting on your stays! Dem-nition! Don't bite off 'lilies' like an early frost! There! Sing it all over again!"

I did; and when I was halfway through he joined in, his wonderful,

full baritone seeming to carry me up and on till I knew I could have soared 'way beyond glory, if he had come too.

"Very good," he said approvingly when I stopped, panting a little and feeling a strange exaltation, "*very* good. Do you know 'By the Still Waters'? It's on page ninety-four of the same book."

I sang it; and he tore his hair, scolded and praised, till, in a fine frenzy, I picked the last note out of the clouds an octave above where it was written as easily as I'd caught the peach the night before, and was delighted to find it just as round and smooth.

He stared at me for a full minute when I had finished, and I felt sorry for my temerity; but he only nodded his head half a dozen times and asked me if I knew this and that till he found one I did. Then he brought a violin and either sang or accompanied me on it till, bolstered up by it and encouraged by the look of admiring interest on his beautiful, dark face, I soared to melodious heights that I had hitherto viewed longingly from afar.

I had always sung—in the choir and at concerts and things—and had accepted my accommodating, rather pleasing voice as a matter of course, just as I had my straight back and the dimple in my chin; but now, as I stood there by the window, breathless and excited, I wondered— But no! I could never sing that way again. It had been the encouragement of that wonderful voice, the wailing sweetness of the violin that had inspired me. I could not hope to do so well again.

"Now, here is a book," said the man, "that will explain at length what I meant about your breathing. Try it on that Solomon business, and to-morrow morning I'll see what you've made of it." He tossed the book, and smiled boyishly when I caught it, and, nodding good-bye, left the window and the room; for, an instant later, I heard the street door slam.

And I? I stood there for a full minute with the book in my hand,

the "New Jerusalem" and the "lilies of the field" running through my head, and a gnawing ache beginning to do likewise through my stomach.

In the days that followed the haunting word, lonesome, seemed to take on the insignificance of days gone by, and words like hope, encouragement, even happiness—though in very small type—began to take its place. I was up and at my embroidery as soon as it was light enough to see; and for long hours I played that the lovely room opposite was mine. I forgot the narrow, hummocky cot bed behind me; the pine box with the little gas stove crouched on one corner of it like a black spider; the three dishes, soap dish and pin tray, like gaudy ladies-in-waiting, sitting primly near. Instead, many times each morning, I arranged and rearranged the beautiful furniture and pictures in the room across the narrow opening between the buildings. Sometimes I'd imagine myself sitting at the rosewood piano, and would hum softly under my breath for fear of waking the man; and sometimes I'd sit in the big leather chair and read the alluring books which I could dimly see through their glass cases. Then, later, when Sam, the squeaky, came to pick up and dust, I'd make believe I was telling him how I wanted things done for the man who would soon be coming sleepily out of his bedroom; how the little round table on which the white aproned restaurant boy was setting out his breakfast would be better directly in front of the big window, as it was a warm morning; how the papers and mail should be laid, so; and the roses on the piano would nod a cheerful good morning to him in front of his plate. Then he would come, a handsome, tousled young giant, and I'd get the cheerful "Good morning" instead of he, though I was always intensely interested in my work about that time.

Later, between bites, he would read me scraps of news, or tease me about my embroidery, which he insisted I must, Penelope-like, rip out during the

night for the sake of putting it in the next day, as no one woman could wear the number of pretty waists I had made. I used to long to shriek the truth at him; but just as I'd get my mouth open my horrid pride would always throttle me.

When we had finished the last scrap of news and breakfast he would saunter over to the piano, or, tucking the violin lovingly under his chin, would come to the big window; and, in either case, for the next two or three hours I lived and had my being in a perfect heaven of harmony. I was always commanded to "pipe up," and was bullyragged and teased and praised till I didn't know whether to cry or to laugh; but I learned more about singing in a month than Phoebe Benson, whom the county papers at home called the "silver throated thrush" and we girls called "the sparrow," could have taught me in a year. I learned some beautiful things from the operas, too, from hearing him sing them; and he was always delighted when I'd surprise him with one of them.

"You are getting as pale as a moon-beam. Why do you stay in so closely, Daylight?" he asked abruptly one morning, regarding me closely. He had told me that his name was Jerome Halstead, and I'd reciprocated; and since that, had been as many kinds of Day as there were in the year.

"How do you know I stay in?" I asked quickly. "You don't get up till nine, and you are gone most of the afternoon and evening."

"True," he said thoughtfully; "but I always think of you as sitting there when I'm away."

"I didn't suppose you ever—" I began flippantly, but stopped abruptly at a strange expression in his eyes.

"And you are always singing, and always working," he went on musingly. Then, rousing himself from his abstraction and trying to see the work in my hands, he asked teasingly:

"What is it today, toadstools or cat-tails?"

One Sunday morning I woke up at the usual workday hour, and after trying in vain to arouse my—the facul-

ty—of my poor, overworked institution, gave it up and prepared to crawl out without 'em. I poked an inquiring foot from under the covers; but, when it struck the chill, damp air, it dodged back in spite of me.

"Humph!" I thought derisively. "Maybe you think you can snooze with the faculty, but you can't! Get a move on you!" Then one of the faculty came to long enough to remind me that I had taken home my work the night before, and that they had told me they might not have any more for some time. Then another piped up and asked if I had forgotten that my week's rent was due tomorrow, and that I didn't have a cent or a single edible or drinkable in the establishment, except ten cents' worth of rice and half a bottle of shoe polish. I had mercifully forgotten, and was getting all scared and smothery, when another—the best of the lot—put in soothingly that it was Sunday and I didn't have to face it for hours.

I snuggled down again, repeating texts—or are they quotations?—like, "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof," and "It's a long lane that has no turning"; and though I was pretty certain that on the morrow mine would turn into a bramble bush or up a tree, I drifted off to sleep again, and didn't so much as wink an eyelash till Sam awakened me by slamming a door.

"You can't go to church!" Mr. Halstead declared with great satisfaction, his hands deep in his pockets, a look of supreme content on his face as he stood in the window opposite. "It's going to rain great guns, and the light of the Day-star would be quenched."

"It's like to mildew if I stay in this"—I started to say "miserable little," but choked it off in time—"room all day!" I said crossly. I had made some window curtains out of an old white petticoat and draped 'em in such a way that, though I had a nice light place in which to sit close to the window, he could not look in, and had no idea how horrid it was.

"I am afraid I am rather selfish," he said contritely; "but it's awfully lonely, unbearably so, with you away."

Selfish! I thought indignantly. I should think he was; thoughtlessly, adorably—I'm sure I didn't mean that word, it just popped out—selfish. But, all the same, I wouldn't have changed places with a Vanderbilt with the stipulation that he was not to be lonely without me: and I snapped my fingers at the rent, rice and work—I didn't have.

"Now," he said as he rose from the breakfast table and came to the window with a pile of papers, "suppose we see what the world is doing, and if we approve of her manner of doing it!"

I leaned back in my chair, my head on the window casing, for it was only a little splint bottom and didn't go all the way up, weak, tired, and with a dreadful shrinking, scared feeling deep down within me that the happy content on top kept poking down out of sight and mind as auntie used to poke the clothes in the boiler with the broomstick. While we were talking it over Sam squeaked and looked longingly at the pile of papers and Mr. Halstead said:

"Yes, take 'em all; we're going to sing now." And we did; all the grand, beautiful anthems and hymns we loved so well, with the accompaniment of the soft, pleading voice of the violin and the gentle patter of the rain that fell steadily between us. I forgot that hunger, cold and weariness were my portion; I forgot the pitiable squalor behind me, I forgot the handful of rice, and, with my eyes on the dark, rapt face of the singer opposite, seemed to be among the clouds with the gates of the New Jerusalem opening before me. They suddenly closed in my face with a bang, however, and the clouds would have no more of me as Mr. Halstead read aloud the telegram Sam had given him:

"Be at Grand Central at two. Don't fail."

He turned to me, crushing it in his hands with some muttered words that would have closed the gates against him forever had the doorkeeper been listening. "A house party up the Hudson," he said dejectedly. "I promised weeks ago, before—" He stopped and looked intently at me for a moment.

"It's past one now, sir," reminded Sam.

"All right!" he cried, rousing himself. "Pack up, lock up and put out the cat. And you?" he asked wistfully. "Is there anything I can do for you? I won't get back until time to go to the opera house tomorrow night; which means," he added sadly, "that I won't see you again till Tuesday morning."

I was trying to shift an obstruction in my throat so I could swallow, and wondering which would ease me most—to beat my head against the wall or to throw myself on the floor and hold my breath. Instead, such slaves are we to convention, I answered calmly:

"You might see if I could catch one of those books back there."

He tore to the cases and began excitedly reading the titles. I selected one I had been wild to read for a long time.

"I used to read a lot," he remarked as he raised his arm to throw it, "but, since I came here, I—why, you see, you've bothered me so I haven't had time." His arm fell to his side. "May I not bring it over?" he begged. "The packing isn't done yet, and—"

I shook my head decidedly, just as I always did.

"Please—" he began, but Sam interrupted him by hurrying to the window and placing his hand on the sash. Before I knew it, I cried out.

"What is it?" asked Mr. Halstead, looking alarmed.

"Oh—the air," I faltered. "It will be so—so close in there—when you come home, if you close it."

He must have realized that a closed window would not be a very inspiring view, for he said curtly to Sam, "Let it alone!" and to me, under his breath as the clock struck the quarter and Sam squeaked in alarm:

"Good-bye, dear little Day-dream, good-bye."

Never, *never*, to my dying day—and then I'll shiver more at the remembrance than I will at the dark waves creeping up to my feet—will I willingly recall the rest of that day and the two that

followed; the awful loneliness, the hunger, the cold—for that's what followed the rain—the numbing fear of the future and my alarm and horror and—oh, I might as well own it!—my aching joy at something I suddenly realized had taken possession of my heart. It had moved in and got all settled, and I'm afraid had a lifetime's rent paid in advance before I even mistrusted that the apartment that had so long been marked "To Let" was taken. I reasoned and stormed and wept, but to no avail; the tenant went calmly on putting up the dearest, most tantalizing pictures and setting flowers in the windows, till, at last, worn out, I gave up.

Oh, why had I been so blind? Why couldn't I have seen that my worn out, half-starved content meant but one thing: that I loved Mr. Halstead? I, a hominy-fed, attic dwelling little nonentity, to have the temerity to love a man with a valet, an auto and a voice! True, an impudent pussy cat may look at a king; but it does not follow that the king will look at the pussy cat, unless it is to say "Scat!"

For three days I looked for work. When I crept in at night, discouraged and spent, the dear room opposite was dark and untenanted, and I slipped out early before anyone was up. I had often wondered what took Mr. Halstead away so regularly afternoons and evenings, though I had gathered from what he said one day that it had something to do with a music store. Whatever it was, it suited my purpose very well, for I had made up my mind never, voluntarily, to see him again. I didn't dare to.

Wednesday afternoon it began to rain again; and, either from the cold or from the fact that the last grain of rice had vanished the night before, I began to feel awfully queer. I'd had a penny in my jacket pocket for a week; but, knowing that anything I could buy with it would only whet the appetite of the ravening beast that already had me half gnawed in two, I gave it to a poor, slatternly girl who was singing on the corner. Singing? Caterwauling,

rather; but the dimes and nickels jingled musically into her tin cup just the same. Singing on the corner! An idea began to form in my dazed brain.

Some time later—I don't know how long, for I'd lost all track of time—I found myself singing something—I don't know what—in a great crowd of people that were pouring out of a building. I didn't have a tin cup or anything to pass around, and was vaguely wishing I had the soap dish, when a white haired old man opened my little handbag, and left it yawning after he'd dropped something into it. Others walked bravely up to the contribution box and put something in, or took out. I didn't know or care which, but sang bravely and steadily on; foolish, simpering little ballads that I'd sung at home, selections from the operas that I'd learned from Him, patriotic songs and anthems; all was grist that came to my mill, and I ground them out impartially.

Suddenly there was a commotion in the crowd, which parted to let someone through; someone who peered curiously into my tired eyes, and then turned quickly and faced the throng. I had been warbling half-heartedly about my love who was far away over the blue, blue seas; but, as a dear familiar voice joined in and gaily announced that he was that same dear love who had braved the perils of that same blue sea to come back to me, I was electrified into life; and when his warm hand closed reassuringly over mine I declared with him in a strange, wild exultation that we'd never be parted more, oh, no; though I kept saying to myself all the time:

"It's a lie, you little goose. A darn lie!" I added to make it stronger.

Right here the crowd shouted and cheered so vociferously at something that we didn't go on for a whole minute, and I heard pleasant thuds in the silk hat that Mr. Halstead extended that were not made by anything smaller than a quarter. Oh, I was so glad and happy! Then the crowd began to shout, "Another! Give us another!" so we did, and through it all I never

took my eyes off his face, and, some way, I didn't feel tired or hungry any more, just content and happy.

At length I saw him make a queer gesture, and, looking, saw Sam's astonished face and staring eyes at the edge of the walk. He nodded understandingly; and, an instant later, Mr. Halstead put his arm through mine and, still singing, hustled me to a carriage by whose open door Sam was standing.

"Get in!" Mr. Halstead said in a low voice; and, as I obeyed mechanically, I heard a man on the sidewalk shout, "An election bet, by thunder!" and Mr. Halstead smiled as though very well pleased.

I heard that and remembered then that it was the day after election and I saw something. I caught sight of the name Halstead on a placard quite near. I looked again and read with astonishment that Jerome Halstead would sing there all that week; and, glancing up, I saw that I had unconsciously stopped before the Metropolitan, and realized that the people about were just leaving the *matinée*.

I understood everything now, and felt more than ever like a poor, starved little alley cat who daren't look at the king.

As the carriage door closed behind him, he turned to me and asked sharply:

"What were you doing that for, Da—Marjorie?"

I knew that I could dissemble no longer; the jig was up, whatever that means. A proud air and an old white petticoat would no longer avail me, so I answered truthfully:

"Because I was starving."

"Starving?" he shouted incredulously.

"Starving!" I repeated emphatically. "And have been ever since I knew you."

"But Marjorie, dear little Day-star, I don't understand. You were always so happy and cheerful—"

"And hungry," I finished for him.

Just here we stopped before the round shouldered, shambling old tene-

ment that crouched in the shadow of the elegant apartment house in which Mr. Halstead had his room. I hated awfully to have him go up with me, but when I said as much he caught me fiercely by the arm and hustled and half carried me up to the top floor. It was as dark as pitch in the hall, and I thought I'd never find the key; but I did at last, and flinging the door wide with a grand air, invited him to enter.

He stood on the mat in the middle, filling the little place so full that I had to crawl up on the trunk to give him room. Oh, it was awful! And I didn't know whether to laugh or to cry. He in his lovely fur-lined coat, his silk hat and immaculate—everything,

bounded—jam up, too—on the north by the cooking box, on the south by the pettiskirted window, on the east by the trunk—and me, and on the west by a bed as knobby as a prairie dog town.

He looked all around him, even up at the ceiling, which didn't strain or dazzle his eyes much, taking in every detail. At length he turned to me, his dear, beautiful face working strangely, and something in his eyes— Oh, God in Heaven! What was the wonderful thing I saw shining through a veil of tears in his dark eyes?

"My poor little Day-star," he whispered brokenly, and opened his strong arms wide; and I—oh, I got off the trunk.



THE ONWARD PATH

By WANDA PETRUNKEVITCH

GOOD-BYE, my youth, since thou must surely die:
 Glad greetings though there be, the delicate sigh
 And happy laughter of old loves renewed,
 We shall not meet again. Good-bye—good-bye.

Ah, me, how it was sweet, unquestioningly,
 From childhood's house of dreams to follow thee
 Into the joyous sunshine, onward wooed
 By lyric word and haunting melody.

How could I leave thee? With what mad intent
 In murky room, o'er dusty books low bent,
 Gather a meager learning, dearly paid?
 Too late I long for thee; thy days are spent,

And now I pass upon the way unknown,
 Alone, alone, forevermore alone,
 Forth from my heart, wild birds that music made,
 Love, Hope and Love, into the darkness flown.



"WHO killed this man?" asked the policeman, as he rushed into the crowd.
 "Hanged if I know," answered the murderer.

ON BOARD THE KERSHAW

By EDITH BOTSFORD

IT was exactly half after twelve by the quaint bronze clock on the mantel when Larry Lewis walked unbidden into Heber St. Giles's library and found him lying on the couch white and breathless and shaking with a sudden chill.

Fifteen minutes later Larry had administered brandy and delivered in no mild terms his profound and exceedingly logical ideas on the abuse of one's health, and the straining of weary nerves past the endurance point, and the turning of night into day for the sake of an ambition that was worthy of three able-bodied men.

His victim lay very still with closed eyes and the shadow of a smile lurking about the fine mouth; when the impetuous remonstrance ceased for a brief moment he turned his head and said in a voice that sounded strangely unfamiliar to his own ears:

"You know how necessary it is—has always been."

"It's damned nonsense, I know—" then Larry shut his lips with a snap, but his silence was eloquent, as he walked to the desk and took up the telephone.

At exactly half after two he had completed all the arrangements for St. Giles to take the brief, restful ocean trip from Baltimore to Boston and back; and it was with a sense of relief that he saw him board the train for the short ride to Baltimore. He turned away from the gates with a restless feeling of resentment toward the circumstances that seemed to surround St. Giles's life with such pitiless force; circumstances of his own creating, Larry often told him, and which happened to

be an extravagant and frivolous mother and sister, who maintained at his expense luxurious apartments in New York when they were not living abroad.

It was almost six when St. Giles crossed the gangplank of the *Kershaw* as rapidly as his weak body could move. Nearly all the passengers had come on board and were leaning over the deck rail, laughing and talking and waiting for the first throb of the engines to proclaim the start.

Someone took his suit case from him and asked for his stateroom checks, and he found himself mechanically following in the wake of his suit case and mentally remarking that the deck seemed endlessly long. Several people turned toward him and remarked how ill he looked, but he did not notice them; his mind seemed straining to the place where he could rest and try to stop thinking.

A few minutes later, when he came on deck again he found a steamer chair ready for him in a sheltered nook, and he sank wearily into it, turning up the collar of his light ulster and pulling his cap down over his eyes. Suddenly everything seemed at peace. The water lapped soothingly against the sides of the boat; a soft air passed over him; even the voices and laughter which surrounded him were soothing instead of irritating. Once he was quite sure he smelled violets, and he opened his eyes reluctantly, but there was no one near him, only a slender figure of a girl in blue passing beyond him. He closed his eyes again.

The boat started, dinner was served and still he lay in his steamer chair; the night wind freshened, bringing its

indescribable odor of the sea across the decks. He leaned forward and spread his steamer rug across his body, feeling a delicious drowsiness, when the odor of violets fanned his face again and the girl in blue stopped in her promenade and leaned over the railing near him, looking out into the night for a moment. Then slowly she turned her face toward him. He looked at her curiously a moment, and something warm seemed to stir within him; her gaze did not falter, but it was not invitation, rather an inexplicable fascination that held her eyes.

He turned slightly and smiled.

"I thought it must be you when I smelled the violets."

"Did you?" The faintest smile curved the line of her scarlet lips, and he could see the lovely outline of her face framed in the thick, soft folds of her white veil.

"Yes, I noticed it when you passed before dinner."

"You didn't go down to dinner, did you?"

"No, I didn't feel hungry." He looked up, surprised that she had noticed his absence. "Are there many on board?"

"Yes, I think nearly all the seats at table were occupied."

"Interesting people?"

"Not very—at least at my table." She drew the collar of her long silk coat about her throat and continued. "A middle-aged family man with his three daughters sit opposite, and the inevitable bride and groom at my left; the seat on my right is unoccupied." She looked straight at Heber with clear eyes.

"That must be mine," he laughed softly.

"That's nice; I'd rather have you next to me than that fat man with the small hat and violet vest."

St. Giles looked at the man thus designated, who was smoking a complacent cigar and filling his body with great breaths of enjoyment.

"Thank you for letting the favor of the criticism fall on my side; however, your fat friend may be worthy

of your consideration—he may fit in somewhere."

"I beg pardon," she drew herself up a trifle and looked at him with questioning eyes.

"Oh, forgive me, I didn't mean that; you see, people are my stock in trade. I study all that seem worth while and use them afterward."

"I don't think I quite understand," she said, smiling and relapsing into her former careless pose.

"Oh, I write, and to do that, you know, one must study people all the time; I seldom go anywhere that I don't find someone worth studying."

"How delightful! Do you suppose you will ever use me?"

"I think—I'm quite sure I shall some day. He spoke slowly, studying her face in the subdued light of their corner and in a vague sort of a way analyzing and trying to put together the characteristics of the gray eyes and dark, level brows, the masses of pale gold hair, the pretty nose and full red lips, that gave an expression of sadness by their pathetic droop when her face was in repose. But when she smiled it was like—St. Giles's speculations ended here, and the girl was saying:

"I don't see how you can put me in a story when you don't know anything about me."

"Shall I send you a copy when it is written?"

She laughed softly. "So that I may see myself as others see me?"

"Yes, as I see you tonight. Where shall I send it?"

He sat up and put his hand in his pocket for his pencil. She moved toward him suddenly, almost impulsively:

"Don't write it down."

"How can I until you tell me what to write?" He laughed and looked up, pencil poised.

"Don't write it—just think of me as Sybil Marsten—that is my name." She sank down on the footrest of his chair and looked at him with eyes that had suddenly grown old, and a worn expression masked the youth of her face.

St. Giles looked at her in surprise. "But how am I to send—"

"You mustn't send it. I'll find the story some way and you will hear from me—if you make it a very nice one." She tried to smile.

Heber put the pencil and paper back in his pocket and sank back in his chair again without replying, conscious of a curious sensation of being plunged into the very heart of a mystery. He looked out to sea and the woman, turning slightly, followed the direction of his gaze. Neither spoke and he felt the silence growing uncomfortable, but without inclination to break it. Presently she spoke softly without turning.

"You have not told me your name."

"Heber Lyons St. Giles."

"Thank you; I'll remember when I'm looking for the story."

"Are you traveling alone, Miss Mars-ten?"

Heber wondered afterward what prompted him to ask that question, for at the moment he felt no interest in what her answer might be. She turned quickly and looked straight at him a moment.

"Yes, I am quite alone."

Something in her face made him feel as if the question had been almost an offense, and he said very gently, anxiously:

"Forgive me again—I seem bent on offending you unintentionally. I thought possibly I might be detaining you from a party of interesting friends and I'm a bore. It's been so long since I've been associated with women, I fear—"

She rose quickly, a hot flush flaming her face.

"It is I who bore. Good night."

A sharp desire to make her understand him and to keep her near him a little longer moved him.

"Don't go." He caught her hand as she passed and drew her backward, and she looked down at him half question-
ing, half glad.

"Are you lonely, too?" she whispered.

"Yes, I've been lonely for years—stay unless you are tired." He moved

a little and drew her down to a place by his side, adding softly, "The deck steward will charge me double fare for my chair." Then they both laughed and he still held the bare, fragrant fingers in his own. A silence fell upon them. Once the woman leaned forward and turned his collar closer about his throat, and he caught her hand and held it prisoner with the other, letting himself slip back into the delicious days of sentiment that had been his before he had plunged into the whirlpool of life and was torn by the fury of its strength.

The silence was very delightful, very restful. Heber felt the weariness of his mind slipping from him and a mental calm creeping over him like a caress. The ocean breeze mingled with the fragrant nearness of the woman and made her seem the center of this restfulness.

After a long time she leaned toward him and disengaged one of her hands, and laying it on his shoulder said softly:

"Will you play a game with me?"

"What game?" glancing anxiously at a party of young people playing shuffleboard under the bright electric lights in the distance.

"Not shuffleboard. Let's go to dreamland—let's forget there is such a thing as loneliness or anxiety; let's play that all the dreams we dreamed when we were young and careless have come true and that we are happy, that we have found the thing we longed for; the brave prince and the silly little princess. And all along our journey the beauty will be a part of our kingdom. The stars tonight will be our jewels and the moon our light; the soft night sounds and the swish of the water will be the grand symphony of the royal orchestra; tomorrow when the sun shines and the skies are blue it will be the fresco of our wonderful palace and we will be so happy, so—"

Her voice suddenly ceased in a quick little sob. Slowly Heber took her hands in his again and drew her nearer him until her eyes looked straight into his and he could feel her warm breath sweep his face. He held her so she

could not move; tingling with her nearness, he whispered:

"Where did you learn your dreams, little one?"

"In life."

"And you have never played this dream life?"

"No."

"And you want to play it now, all you have said—the happiness?"

"Yes."

"Then we will play it together, dear, this fool's paradise."

They met at breakfast the next morning. The family man and his three daughters watched them curiously as they laughed and chatted in a confidential undertone. The bride and groom were unconscious of their existence, but farther down the table a philosopher watched and reasoned and life seemed sadder to him.

On deck, as they strolled back and forth while Heber smoked, he had ample opportunity to study the girl's face by daylight. She was not so young as he had thought her the night before, but her face held a charm, as if her mind and body were imbued with an eternal youth, and the soft coloring of hair and eyes and skin lent aid to the illusion. She wore a gown of that soft, dull blue and a hat that matched it in color, over which the thick white veil was wrapped and tied under her chin. Over Heber's chair hung the long blue silk coat with his ulster, and as he noticed it the wave of warmth stirred through him again, changing the loneliness of long years into something definite and near. He looked down at the girl, as she leaned against the rail, with a new light in his eyes, and prompted by the sudden happy emotion, said softly:

"It's so comfortable to have you here with me, I wish—"

"You mustn't wish, for in our little world all desire is fulfilled. We need nothing, we hope nothing, for there is no future; it's all just a glorious today." Her voice was low and sweet and the look in her gray eyes was very reassuring.

"I won't wish if it's against the law. I don't want to do anything to mar the beauty of our world. It is a glorious day, isn't it?"

They moved on again, speaking softly to one another and paying little heed to what was passing about them. They told each other many things, but with an almost studied care they eliminated their intimate, personal experiences. They spent long hours in their steamer chairs reading aloud to one another; they lunched and played cribbage afterward. Then Heber slept and she sat beside him looking out across the water with the agony of sorrow plain in her eyes and stamped on the tense lips, but when he awoke, rested and contented, she left him for a little while, just to give him a chance to want her back.

When she returned before dinner, just after the sun had sunk, making a path of radiant glory across the water, she found St. Giles pacing the deck, impatient at her absence.

"Come here, dear." He caught her hand and led her to the sunset.

"Isn't it glorious, a royal carpet to the Palace of the Clouds. There must be a fête tonight. Shall we go?"

"Yes, let's go and never come back."

Her fingers tightened about his, and instinctively they moved closer together, leaning arm to arm against the railing. Neither spoke; there seemed to be no need, and the silence of the vast ocean touched them very closely.

They were late going down to dinner, but Sybil's plea of hunger brought Heber back to earth, and they went below, laughing and chatting like two children, and afterward came the long evening on deck, when he helped her into the silk coat and buttoned it under the soft chin and drew her chair very close facing his. Their talk drifted here and there among artists, poets and philosophers, and Heber found in his companion a brilliant mind, deeply read, but more deeply experienced.

Gradually the little groups of people moved away to their staterooms and Heber and his companion were alone in their sheltered corner; scarcely had

the last one disappeared when she turned to him impulsively.

"Isn't it good to be alone? They stayed so late tonight."

"Is it good to be alone—with me?" He caught her hands and drew her to him.

"Can you doubt it?"

After a while he spoke very softly, drawing her closer to him and tilting her face so he could look into her eyes.

"I want to ask you something."

"No, no, not tonight," she whispered.

"Please, dear, for tomorrow—"

"There will be no tomorrow," she interrupted.

"Tomorrow—listen—tomorrow I'm going to take you back to Washington, with me, *with me*. Do you understand?"

Suddenly she strained herself from his arms, covering her face with her hands.

"Oh, I've been mad, utterly mad! Despise me—say anything you please to me."

"What is it, dear?"—he tried to take her hands again. "Am I so impossible? Have I no right to a little happiness? And you would mean happiness incarnate in my busy, lonely life. Can't you come with me?" His voice was eloquent with his pleading.

"Oh, how I want it all, this happiness you are offering me! My life is so starved, I want to be loved just as you could love me. Oh, if I had only been brave and not let you talk to me last night. But I was mad, mad with the pressure of this endless pain!"

"Let me love you, let me help you bear the pain. Tell me what it is." He spoke very tenderly.

"I cannot tonight—don't ask me. I will tell you in the morning. Just let me be happy a little longer tonight, even if it makes the pain all the greater after you are gone."

He caught her in his arms, whispering things to her out of the depths of his lonely, hungry heart.

The sun was bright the next morning when Heber came on deck, but it was quite breakfast time when Sybil appeared. There was a quietness about

her that made Heber feel that she had herself well in hand. She greeted him with the little smile that made tiny dimples about her lips, and they went down to breakfast at once.

Afterward, on deck, she demanded constant motion, as if afraid of silence. They read and played cribbage, lunched and read again, and then went back to their corner and sat there silent, looking out over the water, hand in hand. Suddenly she spoke:

"I said last night I would tell you something."

"Yes, now?"

"I will tell you just before we land. I should like—may I write to you some day? It would be easier to tell you some things that way."

"Will you truly? And then?" he cried eagerly.

"Yes, I will write; only there is no tomorrow in our world, believe me, dear, believe me."

"But I can hope?"

"It's useless."

"I can't, I won't believe it."

"But it's horribly true."

"Promise me something, then, dear."

"Yes, what is it?"

"That if—if—this barrier—dearest, that you will come to me some time. I'll be waiting."

Slowly she raised her eyes to his hurt, pleading ones, stricken with the horror of it all, his share and hers.

"When I can I will come back to you."

A sudden weakness seemed to sweep over the man, and he lay back in his chair; the heat suffocated him, the throb of the engines shook his nerves. When he opened his eyes she had gone. At last he saw her coming from her stateroom toward him again.

They were ready to land.

"I will not go into Boston; I think I shall rest better out here until the boat starts back." He looked very ill.

"Yes, stay here—it will be better. I am going to New York in the morning. Let me say good-bye."

She held out both hands and he took them reverently, looking down into her clear eyes.

"Good-bye for a little while. You will not forget your promise?"

"No; you will hear from me—and *some day I'll come back.*"

He dropped her hands. The huge cables creaked and groaned. They both leaned over the railing, then the people began to move toward the gang-plank.

"Don't come with me. I'll look back and wave my hand."

She moved from his side, but in a moment she came back, her face deathly pale and lips trembling.

"Dear!"

"Yes?" He looked down into the piteous face, numb with the pain of it all.

"Dear, the tall man, see, the one with the gray hair, waiting over there—he is my husband!"

Something snapped, then thundered through his brain, blinding his eyes and sending the blood in hot waves over his body; a confusion of sounds pulsed in his ears. He leaned over the rail again for support, feeling terribly ill. After a little the dimness cleared from his eyes and the sounds ceased; he looked down into the water and his own face, white and strange, stared back at him and the sight stilled the tumult. He raised himself and laughed aloud.

What a story it would all make! He would probably get enough for it to pay for Louise's winter hat. Such a clever little story!

He looked up and caught sight of the figure in blue just stepping into a smart trap. He waved his hat, smiling and bowing, then she disappeared.

A week later, when Larry Lewis

dropped in upon Heber one evening he found him busily writing.

"Well, Heb, what kind of a time did you have?"

"Glorious—the time of my life; so good, in fact, that I've cut down the Parisian allowance and am going to Egypt. I am getting selfish in my old age. Here is my itinerary."

"Good, good for you!"

"It's going to be a wonderful journey. I'm going to climb the pyramids as an added experience to heights I have already scaled. I am going to *feel* the lure of the desert in comparison with other sensations. I may even be indiscreet enough to make love to the Sphinx and try to learn her secrets; I've known men who committed follies far more unwise."

Larry clapped his hands approvingly, crying again:

"Good! Good! Heb, your trip made a new man of you. You have wakened up."

"Oh, yes, I'm wide awake now and I shall never sleep again, for when one sleeps one dreams."

"From dreams to philosophy," laughed Larry. "Well, let's see what your plans are anyway."

"It reads pretty good to me." Heber tossed him a closely written sheet. "I'm off next week for two long years. I wish you were going too, Larry."

He yawned and leaned forward, stirring the fire gently and scattering the white ashes of a half-burned letter. Slowly before his absent, thoughtful gaze the ruddy coals turned faintly, dully blue and the curling smoke seemed like yards of thick white chiffon, and beneath it all glowed a woman's eyes.



WE all buy experience, but few of us are wise enough to sell it back.

THE EVOLUTION OF A GRUB

Being the Seven Stages of One Woman, With Documents

By MARY C. FRANCIS

THE Bugville town hall was jammed to suffocation that hot June night. The School Board had had to overcome opposition in order to introduce the city course of study, and this was the first Commencement. Buggies from ten miles around were hitched in the side streets, and the band played lustily in the open space before the hall.

The applause after each number was deafening, and the Superintendent waded up to his knees in flowers as he announced the titles from the printed program. Molly Piper was scared almost to death. She had braided her red hair tightly the night before, and she knew it was too kinky. The thought was agony, and she glanced enviously at Carrie Jones, whose hateful brown curls always hung in orderly luxuriance about her white neck. Also her corset, the first she had ever had, seemed as hot as brass plates, and her stiff petticoats under her white Swiss dress stuck out so that she knew her white-stockinged legs showed almost to the knee. Shaking like a leaf, but determined to show that she deserved the honor, she stepped forward and read the valedictory.

The Bugville *Clarion* the next day said:

Molly Piper was the valedictorian, and her essay on "Beyond the Alps Lies Italy" was the finest we have ever heard. It showed great literary taste and beautiful imagination, and was full of lovely sentiments which are worthy of this clever young lady. Bugville has a right to be proud of such stars as Molly Piper, and we predict a brilliant career for her. She was dressed in some fluffy white stuff that set off finely her red hair and rosy cheeks. She got more flowers than anybody else.

Molly Piper had never been called a "young lady" before. She bought a scrap book and pasted the clipping in it, and saw "stars" all night.

II

MRS. JOHN LONG finished dusting the little parlor and looked about her with pride. An ingrain carpet, in brown and green, covered the floor. On the center table were two current magazines, an album, a hymn book and a copy of Emerson. Wicker rocking chairs, an organ, conch shells in the fireplace, a big peacock feather brush and ruffled muslin curtains completed the simple furnishing. She glanced in the mirror to see if her hair was properly arranged, for as a bride it was her duty to set an example of neatness and good housekeeping.

Mrs. Harry Butler ran up the steps and peeped in. "Good morning, Molly," she said. "I didn't stop to knock, being as we're old friends. My, but you're snug! And how spruce you look—you always do! Say, have you seen the *Journal* this morning? Well, just listen to this:

"Mrs. John Long, the wife of our esteemed fellow citizen, has been appointed chairman of the executive committee for the strawberry festival, and that makes it a success in advance. Mrs. Long, who was Miss Molly Piper, of Bugville, was a great social favorite in her home town, and has made herself extremely popular with our best society since she came to Jay Center a bride. Her home on High Street has been the scene of several delightful gatherings, and she is more than welcome in our midst. She has some of the finest cut glass in town.

"Molly, what do you think of that?"

Molly tossed her head.

"It's a right nice notice. I'm going to have a new dress for the festival. Could you leave the paper, Carrie? John might like to see it."

III

THE Honorable Mrs. John Long, in a dress that was a triumph of the local dressmaker, entered the drawing-room of their suite in the Mansion House, Silver City, and greeted her husband with an injured air. "John, aren't you dressed for dinner yet? Well, I don't see why you should be too tired to dress. Not that it's any use in this awful hole. What's the use of having money if you can't spend it? Who do you think I met today? Carrie Jones—she married Harry Butler, you know. They say he's making a lot of money.

"Did you say the *Silver City Tribune* has something about me? Where is it? Oh, here it is! Listen!

"Mrs. John Long, whose husband abandoned politics after one term in the Legislature for the mining business, has been one of the most brilliant hostesses of the season, and her affairs have been quite the most desirable functions of the gay younger set. The small but choice assemblies under her patronage have been a marked success. Mrs. Long's pronounced style of beauty lends itself admirably to her individual taste in dress, and at the reception to Governor Hastings she created a sensation in a white lace confection that set off her superb figure to advantage and made her the cynosure of all eyes.

"It isn't rot, John. Since you don't care how I look, I have to get a little appreciation somewhere. My picture came out well. I must get the society editor on the 'phone right away and thank her. She said the other day she'd drop dead if anybody ever showed her any gratitude."

IV

MRS. MELVILLE JOHNSON LONG, widow of the late Mr. John Long, trailed

her diaphanous black draperies languidly across the veranda of the Royal Poinciana at Palm Beach, and sank into a wide chair, attended by a tall, slim youth with a vacuous expression and a maid with a King Charles spaniel.

"Take Muggins for her ride, Phelps, and order my trap for four. Aren't you bored here, Perry? So stupid; nobody one knows. Oh, yes, I did know those people I bowed to in the dining room last night once, but they're not exactly—you know—desirable. One has to be careful in a place like this. I'm not socially prejudiced, but— Oh, Perry, was that really Reginald Van Astor you spoke to! Could you introduce me? Oh, well, any time. Mrs. Oliver Belcourt was in the card room last night. She brought a party down in a private car. I'm going to have my own some day—you see! I've got as much money as some other people. What's that you have in your hand? The *Tattler*! Why didn't you say so! Is my name in it? Do read it to me."

Mr. Perry Van Dusen cast an oblique glance at the eager figure, cleared his throat slightly, and read, with some hesitation:

"As the season advances it grows more and more spectacular, and with the advent of the smartest set of New York society within the past week it may be said that the round of gaiety at this American pleasure garden is at its height. Never have fashion and society been more fully represented than at present, and in the merry rush of frivolity people have done almost everything but play cards in church.

"The social climber has been more in evidence this year than ever. An ostentatious mother and daughter made a sensation earlier in the season by certain injudicious attempts to enter the charmed circle, and the latest source of amusement is a wealthy widow from some obscure place in the West, who, with a maid and a dog, has made desperate efforts to ape the manners of the *haute ion*. Old timers in the social fray declare that her methods are beyond anything in their experience."

Mrs. Melville Johnson Long sat very still for a moment. Then she got up with a careless air. "Dear me, I forgot I have letters to write. Don't wait for me at the clubhouse." Perry Van Dusen threw the paper aside.

"She's no worse than the rest," he muttered.

V

MRS. MONTGOMERY CHESTER VANCE opened her eyes, yawned and stretched luxuriously beneath the silken coverings. Half awake she lay in a delicious retrospect, wherein against a kaleidoscopic background her own picturesque personality was projected like a butterfly wheeling in summer airs. Fifth Avenue was not yet awake, and the first snowflakes of winter were falling.

An open fire sparkled on the hearth, and a great cluster of lilies of the valley gleamed faintly in the half-light. Through their tender odor the scent of the tanbark smote pleasantly on the senses of the waking dreamer. The dressmakers, with their pads, taking notes, the staring, slowly moving crowd, the nudges and exclamations, the battery of eyes that devoured every detail—yes, it was all true. A sudden thought came. What if— She sat up and rang.

"Céleste, my bath, and the papers and my mail. Ah, you have them! No, that's all." The print wavered for a moment; then she read:

The gowns worn by the beautiful Mrs. Montgomery Chester Vance at the Horse Show this week have been veritable dreams, and the variety and extent of her jewels have been the wonder of the crowd. Yesterday afternoon she was in a marvelous creation of golden brown, by Doucet, with wonderful turquoises, and in the evening, when she had the Townsend-Smiths with her in her box, she was radiant in white with diamonds. Mr. and Mrs. Vance have taken the Forrest house on the Avenue while their own is building, and as the wife of another newly arrived copper magnate, she bids fair to repeat in New York the social triumphs due to youth, beauty and wealth which, as Mrs. Melville Johnson Long, she has already enjoyed at a number of fashionable resorts.

Mrs. Vance lifted a silver hand mirror, looked at the fresh, unlined face and laughed aloud.

VI

THE yacht lay to in the bay off Monte Carlo, and the exquisite panorama of

land and harbor lay like a jewel between the deep blue of the sky and the half-medieval terraces and towers of the resort. The cruise in the Mediterranean had been a great success, and the party on the *Regina*, with the Crown Prince of Greece as the guest of the Vances, were the most notable visitors present.

The hostess was serving tea at four in the afternoon, when the Prince lifted his glass as the tug approached and said:

"Ah, I think I recognize Lord and Lady Glenville, and the Countess of Bellomont."

"I see—yes, of course, it is! I sent some notes ashore this morning. We made quite a party in Paris last season, and I want you to meet some old friends informally. Monty, order fresh tea. Did I see last Sunday's Paris edition of the *Herald* this morning? No; I suppose my secretary has it. Do you want to— No, really, Prince; I'll read it aloud to please you if you insist:

"The *Regina*, the palatial steam yacht of the Montgomery Vances, has been cruising all winter in foreign waters, with royalty for a guest. Prince George has been with them *en tour*, and the trip has been a succession of distinguished social honors. The tact and discrimination of the accomplished hostess have made her an international favorite, and her wit, wealth and beauty have been the envy of a number of rivals. Mrs. Vance has issued invitations for a dinner tomorrow evening to the Prince.

"How silly of you to make me read that stuff, Prince. You know I don't care for it myself, but, of course, it's due you— Oh, Lady Bellomont, so glad to see you!"

VII

THE hostess of Stoneways at Newport sat thoughtfully alone in her boudoir, secluded from prying eyes, and carefully read from the pile of newspaper clippings which her secretary had laid in order on the desk. A negligée of white lace fell gracefully about a figure perfect in its lines, and the subdued elegance of the intimate room

might have been the growth of generations of good blood.

—the perfection of refined taste always evident. No undue display has marked anything that Newport's newest hostess has done, yet her affairs have been quite the smartest of the season.

"Ah! That's rather neat."

It is universally conceded that no social triumph for many years has been so cleverly accomplished as that of Mrs. Montgomery Vance, who, after five years of campaigning, this season made her way into the smart set, and not only obtained recognition, but established herself as a most desirable and original hostess. Not only beauty aided her in this social warfare, but fine intuition, and her distinction of manner has been noted as one of her charms, for, unlike many newcomers, the ancestry of birth and breeding has given poise and certainty to all she has done.

Mrs. Vance held the slip motionless and gazed intently at the words. "At

last, authority!" she murmured. "Oh, five years to get my foot on their necks!" She closed her eyes, and a swift vision passed before her mind's eye. She saw the crowded town hall of Bugville, and herself, with her frizzy red hair and her white cotton stockings, shaking before the footlights as she pluckily read: "Beyond the Alps Lies Italy."

She started and glanced apprehensively in the glass. The glow of the glorious bronze hair in the afternoon sunlight reassured her. She touched a bell. "Miss White, take these clippings away, and telephone Morton, of the *Herald*, that he may send his man out on Thursday at ten. I've changed my mind about giving them that page interview on 'The Future of Wealth for the Poor.'"



RAISON D'ÊTRE

By MARGARET ALLEN CAROLYN

GOD made me for you.
He lit the frail lamp of my soul
And turned it low
Till it should answer to your touch,
And leap and glow
Deathless and true.

God made me for you.
He hid the eternal fire in me till you
Came,
To fan the smoldering embers into leaping
Flame,
Until I knew.

God made me for you.
My soul in life's dark night, a lamp
To light the way.
Heart's fire to try your might and glory
In its sway,
Till life is through.

THE STRANGE SPECIAL

By ALICE WOODRUFF MCCULLY

THE man in the corner smoked incessantly. He had dallied through dinner. Now he leaned back and was either negligently watching every act in the room or else his eyes were unseeing and his thoughts a thousand miles away—Inez could not determine which. The man at the corner table was an obstacle—the obstacle.

Inez toyed to the last little action. It was useless; she was denied the time-killing cigar. She paid her waiter and rose reluctantly, slipping her arms into the loose sleeves of her evening coat. She watched him from the corners of her long eyes. Finally she gave absent-mindedness the benefit of the doubt, and swept out of the room with a long, undulating step that was only broken once when she leaned a little forward to squeeze by an unoccupied chair at a small table.

As she reached the door, she felt a stir in the air behind her. There seemed to be an electric thrill in the atmosphere. The head waiter touched her on the arm, and she faced about to the brilliantly lighted room, a glitter in her eyes, her head thrown back, her hands in her muff.

"Madame has made ze mistake. Ze muff—to ze lady there."

He reached out his hand, but she watched him through narrow lids and made no movement. He shrugged his shoulders indifferently and the affable smile hardened.

"Madame insists? Ah, well, will madame not step to ze parlor and show ze lady her mistake?"

Inez's voice was low, but it held a rich, penetrating quality and vibrated with a haughty scorn.

"No, madame will not step to the parlor. Madame remains here. You may call the hotel management. Where is the woman?"

She moved haughtily down the aisles again until she stood at the small table. Her poise was perfect; but she had precipitated the thing all managements seek to avoid—a scene. The two women stared at each other for a moment; then Inez spoke coldly:

"Did you wish to see me?"

For a moment the woman seemed taken aback; then she spoke impatiently:

"Yes; I want my muff."

Inez's brows went up.

"Your muff? I do not understand you."

"You refuse to."

"It is impossible. I have but one muff here—my own. It matches my neckpiece perfectly. You may apologize."

"I will not!" flashed the woman angrily.

A smile of amused and indolent indifference crossed Inez's face. The clerk whispered to her:

"Madam, I implore you, settle this in the parlor. It's too public here."

She laughed indifferently.

"No, I'll finish it where it began. You may arrest the woman if necessary, but I prefer not to appear in court."

And then, as she threw her head back, she caught the eye of the man at the corner table. She paled. Her eyelids quivered; her shoulders drooped and she turned away her head. The man rose slowly and came toward them. He smiled peculiarly.

Inez shivered. Instinctively the woman and her husband had risen. All the eyes in the crowded dining room were turned in their direction. The man from the corner still smiled. When he spoke his voice was low, but it held a mocking note.

"You seem to be having difficulties here, gentlemen. It is just possible I can throw a little light on the subject. I was sitting over there and noted the occurrence here a few moments ago. Am I right?"

He glanced around, waiting for an affirmative reply, then continued slowly, still smiling:

"I noticed this lady," indicating Inez, "come in. I also watched her afterward. She did not leave her chair until she was ready to go—" Here he paused and looked Inez full in the eyes for a good moment. The room hung breathless on his next words. His smile deepened. Inez shivered. He repeated:

"When she was ready to go—she took her things from the waiter and walked straight to the door without an instant's pause or hesitation."

There was a quick escape of breath. The many eyes left Inez's face to look at the woman. For the moment Inez was forgotten. She reached out her hand and grasped the back of a chair. Her own breath escaped with a rasping hiss. Then, as she straightened, she caught the man's eye again, and his handsome features bore an expression of such ironical malice that she swayed again. What manner of man was he to play such a game? He took a card from his case and turned to the clerk and a private detective who stood at his side.

"I think my word is good in a case of this kind."

They both bowed low. He scribbled something on another card and handed it boldly to Inez.

"In case you need me any further in this matter, you'll know where to find me."

Without reading it, she let her hand drop to her side nerveless. He went on lightly, turning back to the men again:

"As for arrests, I should advise you to consult with—the lady. She's been subjected to enough embarrassment tonight to be permitted a choice in the matter."

Then he picked up his hat, bowed with his mocking smile and left the room. The detective glanced inquiringly at the manager, and the latter muttered under his breath:

"Yes, he's straight goods all right. Owns half the mines in Montana or somewhere out there. Writes his cheque in all kinds of figures, and his word's good for anything."

Inez turned slowly toward the door and swept to it. When she reached the walk she remembered the card in her fingers. She raised it, then started back with a short cry. She had not seen the name, but the penciled words explained the triumphant, mocking malice. She tore it across angrily, then remembered and thrust it into her muff.

She stood on the curb debating. When a cab drove up she stepped in mechanically and leaned back against the cushions. But when the driver asked for the number, she spoke hoarsely:

"Wait—I don't—know—yet."

She closed her eyes. Her head swam; the noises of the city sounded in her ears. Somewhere in the distance a clock chimed. It was too late! She dared not take the risk. An hour earlier and she might have defied him. She leaned forward and whispered the name of a café to the driver.

When the carriage drove up to the curb Thornton helped her to the ground gravely. She shrank from the lights. The same ironical malice curled his lip.

"What do you want?" she hissed.

He laughed softly.

"The sidewalk would be a poor place to tell you. I'll reserve that until later."

He led her to the door. The interior was richly furnished; but the music was loud and the palms were in challenging evidence. She shrank

back, but his grasp on her arm tightened.

"A crowd for solitude!" he said lightly.

"But not here!" she cried.

"You've seen the power of my word. It's just as good here; still—there are others."

She said nothing and followed him as he threaded his way in and out. He laughed when he took her furs from her. She threw her coat back. As he sat down, she asked again:

"Now, what do you want? What is your price?"

"That is an ugly word," and he struck a match.

"What is the use to mince words now?" she exclaimed impatiently. "You've forced me here. Now what do you want?"

He watched her through narrowed lids, then flicked the ashes from his cigar slowly.

"I want to analyze you; it's a little play to me."

"Play! Play!" she laughed scornfully. "Yes, you want to play—play as a cat plays with a mouse. You've played a pretty game tonight—a pretty one. You lied for amusement—lied, I tell you. You lied because your position was assured and it amused you. That card amused you too; it was playing on my fear. It amuses you, too, to hold me here now when my time is so short. Play? Yes, an amusing game. Well—play it—quick!"

The waiter came before he could reply. Inez said, "Coffee," laconically, and Thornton muttered, "Two Scotch; that's all." Then, as the man disappeared, he turned to the girl again:

"The woman who does a man's work takes a man's drink."

Inez took refuge in a stony silence. Thornton watched her pale, wan fairness. Twice she looked at her watch, but made no other movement. At last he leaned forward.

"You play big chances, my lady, for small stakes."

The color mounted to her face, but the quick retort died on her lips. Instead, she spoke slowly:

"Yes, big chances—tremendous."

"I should hardly think it worth your while."

"No?"

"The bigger the stake the less the risk."

She laughed bitterly.

"That all depends."

He tilted his chair back.

"Now, see here, you are beating about the bush. I'm not a philanthropist, but still, I think there is a certain gray stone mansion that would hold out open arms for your free admittance for a few years at least."

Her eyes dilated.

"You mean—"

"I mean you overstepped certain bounds when you walked off with something that didn't belong to you. You know there is such a thing as law in this country—also, back of it, the—penitentiary."

She rose to her feet, grasping the table with both hands. Her white face swayed toward him.

"I must catch that ten twenty. It's imperative."

"I'm sorry, but I am more imperative."

"Have you no heart?" she cried.

"No, I don't believe I have. It's one of the things that modern civilization compels us to dispense with."

"I am sorry," she said simply. Her eyes searched his face slowly; then she said: "I'll tell you a little story. It may amuse you, or perhaps, with the mystery solved, you'll cease to care for more."

She sat down close to the table and leaned her elbows on it.

"There were once a man and a woman, and the woman hated the man. In the end she married his enemy, and together they built a careful network of lies about him until one day the law swooped down on him and called him names that are—unspeakable of such a man. But he was a methodical man. He'd kept always the proofs of his innocence. He was impatient for his trial. It would clear him. And then, the night before, the letters disappeared and left no trace behind them. The

prosecuting attorney laughed at the tale of their existence. The man had forgotten the woman and overlooked his enemy. He could give no explanation.

"And then it was that the man's wife caught a glimpse of the woman's face and the triumph it bore. An old story came back to her; she put two and two together; she tracked and dodged and almost failed. And through it all she could gain no proof, but she became more and more certain that the woman at least knew. She was afraid to get a search warrant, for the letters could have been burned in a moment and there would be nothing left to show. And then, the night before the closing of the trial, the wife, in another city, saw the woman place a packet carefully in her muff. The wife feared to call the police then. If it had not been the right one, the woman could have destroyed the others when she found herself suspected. She would give up her future hold for the vengeance now.

"The wife played a bold game for high stakes. She had a good eye for furs. She bought a scarf hurriedly that nearly matched the muff. Then she followed them to the dining room, and—she did what you saw, and she was called. The packet was fastened in a catch arrangement. She couldn't transfer it in time to apologize and restore the muff. Afterward, when she found the chance to look, they were filled with such a mass of technicalities that she could not understand them. She doesn't know now if they are the right ones or not. And a stranger holds her under threat of arrest. There is justice, right, honor against—his amusement."

Thornton's face was a mask. He flicked the ashes from his cigar.

"Yes, it was too bad that a man's amusement should interfere."

"But—but no man would let it in a case like—that," she faltered.

He laughed.

"You forget. The tale is rather strange. It's not one to be easily swallowed."

"He couldn't doubt her!"

"Some men would not believe any woman. All men are not so fortunate as your hero; all wives are not saints—or self-sacrificing detectives."

She bit her lip and leaned forward again.

"Listen. I believe that there is latent in every woman the angel and the devil; and in the course of her life she meets with one man, rarely more, and that one generally her husband, who has the power to bring either one out. If he strikes the wrong chord, he with his greater experience should shoulder a little of the blame."

"No, a woman's a woman; she's over seven."

"Then you do not believe me?"

"No; and if I did, it would make no difference."

She reached for her glass; her face hardened; her eyes glittered; there was steel in her laugh.

"Well, if you insist—I'll be a good loser; but, I'm really oppressed in this place. You had me keyed up to a high tension. We'll forget the tale, but take me somewhere else."

She carried herself proudly. They waited at the curb a moment for an automobile. A red touring car responded to his signal. He turned his back a moment, and as he did so she pressed against the chauffeur, forcing her gold bag into his hand.

"When I say the word, to the Union Station—quick!" she whispered.

Then she stepped into the car. Thornton started to spring beside her, but the door slammed in his face and he was thrust back into the street. It was over in a flash and the red car was a block away before he realized what had happened. Inez leaned forward.

"Faster, faster! Can't you make it go faster?"

She ran through the station heedlessly. The steel gates swung in her face. She staggered to them and shook the bars futilely. Her cloak opened and her jeweled corsage glittered; shimmering folds of her gown swept the dirt and cinders of the floor. A cloud of black smoke rolled back, begriming the

laces at her neck and sleeves and swallowing her up.

She stumbled back to the wall and sank down on a bench in a heap, her head in her hands, the brilliants in her hair all awry, a long streak of smut across the pale shoulders of her cloak. Time slipped from her. Her head whirled and burned and seethed.

When she did become conscious of someone near her the words fell on her ear in a confused jumble. When a hand was laid on her shoulder she straightened up. The station master stood over her and behind him was the matron. He spoke to her again:

"You the lady that's waiting for a special to follow the ten twenty?"

Inez rose slowly, holding to the back of the bench.

"A special—to follow—the ten twenty? Yes, I—am—waiting."

She stumbled as she started forward and the matron slipped a hand under her arm.

"There, there, my girl, maybe it ain't so bad's they made you think. Anyway, dying's only going home."

Inez straightened. Dying? Yes, when it was the body that died, but the death of the soul brought the slow torture of the years. She laughed bitterly, then turned to the man.

"Which gate did you say?"

"Number three, miss."

She walked to the gate with the same sweeping step with which she had crossed the hotel dining room.

A light engine and one coach were waiting on the track, and she barely gained the platform before they pulled out.

It was only as she leaned back in the seat that she began to wonder at the strange coincidence of this special that followed the ten twenty, and further, at the strangeness of the fate that singled her out for the opportunity.

She felt again for the papers in the muff and drew them out slowly. The light was dim, and the swaying of the coach made it almost impossible to

decipher the fine writing. Still, as she picked it out word by word and freed it from its technicalities she began to gather the story of a tremendous and daring scheme by which one man had attempted to establish such a corner as the markets of the world had never known. Whether or not he would have succeeded had he lived she could not tell; but he had covered his tracks well—so well that her own husband stood ready to be sentenced for embezzling the money that had been used in the scheme.

She shuddered, but went over the papers again. Yes, the proof was unmistakable, in the Old Man's own handwriting, with entries of the money turned over to her husband. All was there, just as he had claimed it was, and she shuddered again as she thought of what the outcome could have been—would have been had the Old Man's niece destroyed them instead of keeping them for the future. Then, gradually, the peace and the freedom of the morrow rose before her and she slept.

As she slept Thornton, the cynic, the man whom many called evil, rose from the shadows, walked down the aisle and stood over her. He took the papers from her lax hands and sorted them, then stood watching her; but his smile was not all malice, and in a moment he leaned forward to draw her cloak more closely about her shoulders. With the act the irrepressible spirit of malice seemed to leave him altogether, and he put the papers back into her muff, then threw his coat over his arm and again picked up his scribbled wire to her attorneys. For a second he leaned over her impulsively, then as quickly drew back and walked out onto the platform of the special he had ordered for her. Beneath his breath he muttered:

"Angel or devil, some of us always strike the wrong chord."

Then as the special slowed through a station Thornton dropped off into the night.

"CÔTE D'AZUR-RAPIDE"

Par PIERRE VERNON

AU-DESSUS des bruyères que la gelée nocturne avait poudrées de diamants, Jean Bastien, allongé sur le talus du chemin de fer qui borde l'Armançon, leva lentement sa tête inquiète.

Le jour allait poindre; une lueur rose filtrait à travers les brumes de la rivière, du côté de Chenay et de Danne-moine... Au loin, sur la droite, les lampes de la gare de Tonnerre pâlissaient.

Jean Bastien, soulevé sur les mains, le cou tendu, écouta: il n'entendit d'abord que le murmure frais de l'eau qui glissait au bas du talus le long des vernes et des saules... Un angélus tinta derrière lui dans le clocher de Vezinnes; la tour de Junay répondit et ce fut, pendant quelques minutes, un murmure de cloches qui parlaient entre elles au-dessus des grands arbres nus.

Puis, dans le silence qui suivit, un grondement accourut de Laroche; un train aux wagons noirs et rouges, enveloppé d'une écharpe de fumée blanche, passa devant Jean Bastien soudainement tapi dans la bruyère.

— Le 133, fit-il entre ses dents... Il va se garer à Tonnerre, puis ce sera le train de marchandises et, enfin, le rapide!...

Des flammes aussitôt dansèrent devant ses yeux et sa main se crispa sur une lourde clef anglaise dissimulée dans l'herbe... Ah! tout à l'heure, dans cette vallée calme, quel fracas!... quels cris! quelle épouvante!...

Son plan lui apparut très simple: le mécanicien Lourdel conduisait la machine du train de luxe de Nice entre Laroche et Dijon; sur la voie descendante, le rail de gauche, déboulonné, faisait

sauter cette machine hors du talus et précipitait le train dans l'Armançon...

Une joie intense, avec une flambée de haine, illuminait le visage tourmenté de Jean Bastien à la vision de son ennemi broyé sous les roues, éventré par les éclats de la locomotive et gisant ensanglanté au fond de la rivière.

Renvoyé depuis deux jours sur le rapport du mécanicien que, dans un soir de ribote, il avait injurié et frappé en cours de route, Jean Bastien venait de perdre sa place de chauffeur.

Il n'avait pas voulu rentrer chez lui, dans son petit logis de Laroche, et avait erré, le ventre vide, la tête en feu, le long du canal de Bourgogne, comme un fou, ne songeant pas à s'accuser, ayant sans cesse devant lui le visage grave et un peu dur de Lourdel, accumulant mille griefs contre celui qu'il jugeait seul responsable de ce désastre.

Car c'était un désastre; qu'allaient devenir sa femme paralysée et ses deux filles?... Pour la vieille mère, c'était la mort à brève échéance, et un avenir de honte, pire que la mort, attendait ses filles, déjà jolies et un peu coquettes... Il exagérât comme à plaisir les malheurs qui devaient suivre son renvoi, et, avec la haine qui prenait dans son âme simple des proportions démesurées, le désir de se venger se précisait, s'imposait, et voici qu'il n'était plus maître de sa volonté, et qu'il avait décidé cette chose horrible dont il souriait: supprimer Lourdel en faisant dérailler le rapide... Après? Eh bien! après, il serait content!...

Derrière le 133, le train de marchandises s'en alla vers Tonnerre, lourd, essoufflé, cahotant... aucun convoi main-

tenant ne devait passer sur la voie descendante, avant l'arrivée du rapide.

D'un regard jeté autour de lui, Jean Bastien constata qu'il était bien seul; en rampant, il vint sur le ballast et, méthodiquement, déboulonna l'extrémité d'un rail...

Il avait le temps; il allait sans hâte, les lèvres serrées, mettant dans ses poches les écrous qu'il dévissait... Il dut, pour faire sortir le rail des traverses, se servir de sa pince comme d'un levier; ses mains noueuses craquèrent sous l'effort... Le lourd ruban de fer soulevé fut écarté de la place qu'il occupait. C'était assez...

D'ailleurs, il fallait se cacher encore... De Dijon, maintenant, montait vers Paris, un rapide qui se croisait habituellement à cet endroit avec le train mené par Lourdel... Ce dernier était en retard. Mais, patience!

Jean Bastien entendit le rapide de Dijon filer en gare de Tonnerre, avec un fracas qui remua toute la vallée... En se rapprochant, des coups de sifflet répétés indiquèrent un ralentissement. Jean comprit qu'un signal avait été négligé à l'entrée d'une courbe, et le train, au lieu de passer comme une trombe, glissa doucement devant lui.

Il aperçut d'abord le mécanicien, le corps à demi sorti de la machine, les yeux fixés en avant... puis le wagon-restaurant vide à cette heure; enfin, les voitures de luxe, salons et sleepings...

Ici et là, des glaces baissées laissaient entrer l'air vif du matin dispersant l'atmosphère épaisse de la nuit de voyage.

Il put voir distinctement un grand Anglais roux, la casquette sur les yeux, allumant une courte pipe, puis des gens qui s'étiraient et bâillaient le long des couloirs...

Une femme en deuil, très blonde et pâle, souriait à un jeune enfant à demi-éveillé... Il entrevit encore une fillette dont le doigt traçait des mots sur la vitre humide, un couple élégant et jeune échangeant le premier baiser du matin... A côté, un prêtre, son bréviaire sous le bras, traçait sur ses lèvres un signe de croix... Enfin, une jeune fille penchée au dehors de la portière, les cheveux bruns dénoués, buvait la fraîcheur de

l'aube... Ses lèvres entr'ouvertes devaient jeter au vent quelque amoureuse chanson...

Elle aperçut Jean Bastien qui la regardait... Elle lui sourit, découvrant la blancheur de ses dents, et du bout des doigts laissa tomber sur lui un baiser.

Le geste était si joli, si câlin et si tendre, qu'il semblait répandre de la pitié, semer une pincée de bonheur sur la misère qui se vautrait là dans l'herbe, et ce baiser frais passa sur la colère de Jean Bastien comme un souffle de caresse et de douceur sur une brûlure ardente...

Le convoi avait repris sa course normale, mais l'ancien chauffeur demeurait immobile, surpris et gardant dans ses yeux la vision souriante... "L'autre" allait venir maintenant, emportant aussi des existences humaines, des êtres heureux de vivre, un cortège d'autres sourires et d'autres baisers...

Et soudain, dans l'intelligence obscure de Jean Bastien, une horreur de l'acte monta comme un flot de boue...

Lui qui n'avait jamais été un malhonnête homme, allait-il en cet instant devenir meurtrier et criminel et joncher cette voie de cadavres et de mutilés?...

Le sursaut de sa conscience réveillée le troubla au point qu'un tremblement de fièvre agita tout son corps.

Sa haine, son âpre désir de vengeance disparurent, effacés sous la pourpre terrifiante du sang qu'il allait répandre.

D'un bond, il fut debout sur la voie... d'un geste hâtif et puissant il rapprocha le rail, le remit en place et sortit les écrous de sa poche...

Rapidement, il les posait sur les boulons, sa clef virait dans sa main et, à genoux, sur le ballast, il se traînait le long du rail, anéantissant l'œuvre sinistre.

Il avait peur de n'avoir pas le temps! Le train aurait dû passer depuis quelques minutes et il se félicitait de ce retard comme si une chose heureuse lui fût survenue.

Vers Flogny, du côté de Laroche, un coup de sifflet bref l'effara... Il leva la tête: un long ruban de fumée flottait là-bas au-dessus de la vallée... mais il ne lui restait qu'un dernier boulon à ser-

rer... Il souriait maintenant, sûr que le train était sauvé; et, soulagé de son désir de meurtre comme d'un poids étouffant, il vissa son écrou avec tranquillité, sans hâte, par une sorte de vanité, de défi à la haine donneuse de mauvais conseils.

Les rails frémissaient sous les trépidations prochaines... encore quelques secondes et il allait, sa besogne achevée, se rejeter en arrière et le regarder fuir ce train, dont il avait rêvé la destruction.

Et il songea à la jolie voyageuse de tout à l'heure... Sûrement, dans le rapide de Lourdel, il s'en trouvait d'autres qui partaient, frileux oiseaux, vers des pays de fleurs et de soleil.

Elles ignoreraient toujours ces inconnues et ces étrangères, que leur vie heureuse et facile avait failli se briser là, violemment, et que de ce dernier boulon qu'il resserrait, avaient dépendu toutes leurs joies à venir, tous les plaisirs élégants et les sensations délicates qui les attendaient sur des plages lointaines.

Et pendant qu'il travaillait, sans plus rien entendre, avec un attendrissement étrange qui lui mettait aux yeux une buée de larmes piquantes, le rapide franchit l'espace d'un élan formidable de bête grondante, et Jean Bastien, encore agenouillé, la main sur son outil, fut emporté, broyé comme dans une étreinte brutale et rejeté sur les bruyères du talus...



ÉTOILES!

Par GEORGES BOUTELLEAU

PERLES de l'étendue, étoiles,
Qui piquez d'or les soirs sereins,
Je veux vous prendre à vos écrins,
Pour broder aux anges des voiles.

Etoiles, fleurs des blonds étés,
Avant les éternels désastres,
Laissez-moi, comme un bouquet d'astres,
Vous offrir aux déshérités.

Étoiles, larmes de mystère,
Qui tombez du large des cieus,
Emplissez, jusqu'au bord, mes yeux,
Que je pleure notre misère!

LOVE'S TILT

By CLARA SHERBNER

S^{HE}: Avaunt! Be on thy way, thou trifling tease!
Thy bold attempt my little hand to squeeze
Shall end in this:
That we, henceforth, shall as two strangers be,
And my esteem, for this effrontery,
Thou'lt ever miss.

Thy sex are all alike in churlish ways,
And men are not the same as in the days
Of long ago.
For so I've heard my mother often tell
My elder sister Madelaide, and—well,
She ought to know.

H^E: The knightly ways whereof you speak, alas,
Are dead these many years, but, let that pass!
Their mem'ry jars.
The modern girl's estate is something more
Than dimpled sweetness locked behind a door
With iron bars.

Her own free will, employed with modest grace,
Is quite enough to keep her in her place.
Yet even now,
"All's fair in love and war," my father claims,
And boldness lends a spice to lovers' games,
As he'll avow.

S^{HE}: If, as you say, your father holds it so,
It may be right, and yet—I scarcely know.
At any rate—
I'm sure my mother'd cancel all she said,
If she were told that chivalry is dead
And out of date.

H^E: What matter it, though she be right or wrong?
The fact is this: All these affairs belong
To just us two.
And as for father's words, what should I care?
In love or war I think there's nothing fair
Compared with you.

S^{HE}: (Last word)—????????

MR. SHAKESPEARE COMES TO TOWN

By CHANNING POLLOCK

FOR the first time in something more than a year Bill Shakespeare has been in our midst.

Robert Mantell brought him. It is always Robert Mantell who brings Bill. Without the ciceronage of that gentleman Shakespeare's chance of seeing New York would be rather less than that of the angry lion that meets Theodore Roosevelt in Africa. The Bard of Avon narrowly escapes being the barred of Broadway.

Has the populace of our fair city risen to the occasion of the poet's presence on Forty-second Street? Have the myriad lovers of classic plays, their appetites whetted by long waiting, rushed to the theater and fallen upon the box office "like the wolf on the fold"? Have they fallen that way? The answer is "Nope!" It pains me to make such an admission, but the plain, unvarnished truth is that they have done nothing of the kind.

Mr. Mantell's engagement at the New Amsterdam has been described in the advertising columns of the press as "unprecedented since the days of Edwin Booth." That much may be granted. We have been told, at fifty cents per agate line, about "New York's magnificent response to the uplift of the legitimate drama." This response enabled the only Shakespearean actor "on the job" in America to present "King John" eight times, "Macbeth" six times, "Riche-lieu" and "The Merchant of Venice" each five times, "Hamlet" and "Louis XI" each four times, "King Lear" three times, "Othello" and "Romeo and Juliet" each twice, and "Richard

III" for a triumphal run of one consecutive evening. The least successful modern play produced here this season had a greater number of performances than the most successful of William Shakespeare's, and the principal tragedian of our decade, with his ten changes of bill, remained with us scarcely as long as "The Return of Eve."

In the face of this data the best friend of the "legitimate drama" can hardly maintain that New York has been sitting up nights waiting for Shakespeare. And now ours "to reason why." Public indifference certainly is not due to lack of incitement. The Bard is better advertised than the prospective war with Japan. Clubs are formed to discuss him; editorial writers try to force support of his prophets upon us as a duty; William Winter dignifies the Mantell engagement by setting his mention of it apart from all the other theatrical announcements in the *Tribune*. Were half this fuss made over any living author there wouldn't be a playhouse in the country big enough to hold the throngs that would flock to see his works.

Mr. Winter asks us to believe the general apathy due to the stupidity, the shallowness and the frivolity of modern audiences. Of course, *you* may believe what you please, but I find myself unable and unwilling to accept this explanation. Civilization, unlike the crab, does not walk backward, and nobody can compel me to concede that the people of an age densely ignorant of electricity, astronomy, dynamics, the law of gravitation

and the first principles of personal cleanliness knew more about the drama than we do. I prefer to assume that, with the accession of knowledge, and the consequent change in our philosophy, in our outlook on life, we have come to require more than can be found in a drama four hundred years old. In other words, Shakespeare has not outgrown us, but we have outgrown Shakespeare.

There—it's out! For ten years I have been wanting to write just this thing, and have lacked the courage. There is no other windmill against which it is so hopeless to ride tilting as that whose sails are sham, hypocrisy, pharisaism, sluggish and superstitious veneration of mere establishment. "You are old, Father William," we chant with Alice in Wonderland, and so Father William must be beyond criticism. 'Twas ever thus. Four centuries ago Michelangelo could obtain consideration for his Hercules only by burying it and digging it up again as an antique. The Shakespeare fetish has waxed invincible with age. George Bernard Shaw was called blasphemous when he directed his lance against this "hitherto unquestioned perfection and infallibility." So, having finally got the nerve to say my little say, I am quite prepared for being set down an unmitigated ass. I shall save trouble by admitting in the beginning that I am an idiot, uneducated, unappreciative and wholly uninformed regarding the drama. So far, so good! Now let us proceed!

JUDGED by the requirements of to-day, Shakespeare's plays are as much an anachronism as would be Robert Fulton's steamboats. Fulton built what, in his time, undoubtedly were excellent vessels, but that is no reason why we should want to make the trip from New York to Albany upon another *Clermont*. Neither is the fact that the mighty Stratfordian was predominantly and supereminently the greatest dramatist of the sixteenth century any particular reason why we should crowd the New Amsterdam Theater to witness his works in the twentieth.

The standards of poetry, the conditions bearing upon it, are immutable. That is why Shakespeare's compositions continue to be our finest, our most exquisite and majestic examples of poetry. Drama, however, is something different. It purposes and purports to reflect life and thought—the life and thought we know and understand. Its appeal is and should be to the heart, and exists in proportion to our comprehension of the characters presented, and of the ideas, emotions and conditions which actuate them. The Greek drama, though admirable in its own age, was retired to the closet when we ceased to be interested in the things that interested the Greeks. Similarly, we are losing enthusiasm for plays, whether by Shakespeare or by Anthony Hope, which treat of a period in which the biggest man was he who could empty the biggest flagon of ale, and the nattiest little dressers bought their trousers at a hardware store.

"Life is real, life is earnest," and the life about us is pulsing, quivering, throbbing with virile, vital drama. Every time somebody invents a telephone or a motor car we find new possibilities of story and of situation. Our ideas and our standards are molded in the earthen crucible of experience. We have learned that true romance is not shown in the dropping of a rose, nor true bravery in the throwing of a gauntlet, but in simple, silent devotion to one woman for all time, or in unswerving allegiance to the inglorious duties of every day. Our notion of comedy is no longer the spectacle of a coarse and drunken Falstaff, nor is our conception of tragedy a stage strewn with slaughtered Emilias, Desdemonas, Iagos and Othellos. Shakespeare, were he among us now, would be the first to realize the changed state of sentiment and sensibility, but, since he is not, our theatergoers very rationally flock to Augustus Thomas and to Eugene Walter, leaving the Swan of Avon to audiences composed, in the main, of school teachers, students of literature, members of

reading circles and persons who got their tickets through the People's Institute.

Shakespeare is being relegated to the library table, where he belongs and where he can be studied to the very best advantage. His wonderful lines, more thickly jeweled than any others in English, are far too beautiful to be caught up from the lips of incompetent actors. The Bard was the great antagonist of the spotlight; his loveliest speeches were given to his minor characters, and generally are spoken by the worst performers obtainable for the money. Victor Herbert once told me that much of Wagner's music was too complicated, too skillfully written to be appreciated when heard, and that it must be read to be comprehended. If this is true of a composer, how much more true it is of a great poet. The value of Shakespeare is in the perfection of his rhetoric, and in his pictures of the manners and habits of the period he adorned. This value has no concern with the stage, which is and should be a mirror to reflect the present, and not a telescope to search into the past.

It is well that occasionally our theater should be devoted to a revival of "Hamlet" or "King Lear" or "The Merchant of Venice." These pieces, dealing with emotions nearer universal than those depicted in "King John" and "Richard III," preserve the traditions of the drama, and lend it some of the dignity of a more leisurely literature, of a statelier time. Their performance at intervals would permit the comparison of different actors in the same roles, and so would encourage understanding of histrionic art. But it is high time we began to disregard the ancient superstition that Shakespeare is *the* great dramatist of all epochs, to discard the Bardolatry that compels countless persons to choose between being bored to extinction by "the classics" and being branded unlettered and unintellectual. It is time, too, that we rid our own authors of the badge of hopeless and eternal inferiority, of the yoke that links them with a dead past which stubbornly refuses to bury its

plays. "We must hurry on," says Mr. Shaw; "we must get rid of reputations."

I suppose by this article I have safely got rid of mine.

LET us back to our muttons and our Mantell.

The chief reliance of the engagement at the New Amsterdam was the production of "KING JOHN," a sort of novelty, since, to the best of my knowledge, it was last performed in America in May, 1874, when it had a run of five nights at Booth's Theater. The cast there included Junius Brutus Booth, whose John must have been greatly inferior to Mr. Mantell's; John E. McCullough, Agnes Booth and Minnie Maddern, who is now Mrs. Fiske.

"KING JOHN" is one of the very worst plays in English. William Winter, who is not given to the crime of literary *lèse-majesté*, admits that "while the principal character is not uniformly and explicitly drawn, it is embedded in a tumultuous and somewhat distracting profusion of military exploits. Almost all of the first half of this play is devoted to a deployment of the chief persons concerned in it, and to preparation, by means of debate and the clangor of martial combat, for the portrayal of those persons." I submit to you whether or not these faults would be sufficient to damn the work of any modern author.

As a matter of fact, any modern author who wrote "KING JOHN" and succeeded in passing it off as his own would be laughed out of managerial offices and hooted from the stage. The tragedy deals, in a diffuse and desultory manner, with the rival pretensions of King John and Prince Arthur to the throne of England. These pretensions, which cannot be described as vitally interesting to New Yorkers of the year 1909, are argued mainly before three exceedingly frowzy citizens upon the wall of Angiers, and lead to nothing more dramatic than a family row in which Queen Elinor and would-be-Queen Constance abuse each other like a couple of fishwives in Billingsgate.

Constance has been lauded by scholars as "a model of affecting maternalism," but I never observed that she affected any audience as does the unfortunate mother in "The Witching Hour" or the persecuted wife in "The Third Degree." In truth, I don't remember having seen people moved to tears at any performance of Shakespeare.

"KING JOHN" has absolutely no point of contact with contemporaneous human feeling. It is rambling, episodic, verbose and utterly false to history. Macaulay's picture of poor John differs from Shakespeare's as a kippered herring differs from a peach Melba. The piece is full of discussions of illegitimacy, and other parlor topics of conversation, that, if they took place in "The Easiest Way," would result in endless editorializing upon "the degradation of our stage." Its only stirring scene is that in which Hubert undertakes to blind Arthur, and we have the word of Alan Dale, prompted by a recent production of "The Submarine," that "the prospect of physical suffering is not drama."

Mr. Mantell's delineation of King John was a remarkably fine bit of acting—I venture to believe it the finest ever brought into this play. He succeeded admirably in revealing every side of the monarch's nature and disposition, and his delivery, clear, accurate and vigorous, has been equaled in our generation only by some of the readings of Otis Skinner. Mr. Winter goes too far, however, when he says that Mr. Mantell's utterance of the words, "Death! A grave!" caused the auditor to "shudder with horror." There wasn't a shud within my range of vision, and so I am forced to conclude that Mr. Winter's reverence makes him a critical Quixote, seeing an army in what really is only a flock of sheep. Mr. Mantell's support was hardly better than mediocre, but his production showed great intelligence in that it was beautiful without being conspicuous.

E. H. SOTHERN returned to us the last week in March, appearing at

Daly's Theater in a repertoire including "Richelieu," "Hamlet," "Lord Dunsyre" and "If I Were King." Of these, only the Bulwer Lytton drama was absent from his bill when, something less than a year ago, he had an extended engagement at the Lyric.

"RICHELIEU" is a good, straightforward, old-fashioned melodrama. Having been written in the present century, it is more human and less an ill-jointed skeleton, clad in rhetorical purple and fine linen, than are the works of Shakespeare. Its lines are poor in comparison with the Bard's, being marked by florid flights rather than by honest poetry. There is the common contradiction, notable in plays of all periods up to the present, of the axiom that "deeds speak louder than words." Bulwer's characters, like Shakespeare's, talk a great deal more than they act, reveling in asides and soliloquies, and halting everywhere to make sentences that shall find their way into some Encyclopedia of Familiar Quotations. Thus, De Mauprat, come to murder Richelieu, pauses in his evil intent until he can apostrophize the moon!

Nevertheless, this drama, fertile in incident and ingenious in complication, is far from being uninteresting. Mr. Sothorn's performance is not the best in his repertoire, but it commands the attention and possesses elements of scholarliness. The chief fault to be found with his conception is that it is physical instead of mental, laying stress rather upon the personal force than upon the craftiness of the cunning Cardinal. His speech, "I am old, infirm, most feeble," comes as a surprise from a man who, only one act before, has all but roared his threat of "the curse of Rome." Gladys Hanson is too mellow a Julie, but excellent portraits of Baradas and De Mauprat are supplied by Eric Blind and Frederick Lewis. Rowland Buckstone wins the usual laughter for De Beringhen, whose "comedy relief," based upon a prodigious appetite, is an idea that was old even in the time of Shakespeare.

JULIUS CÆSAR's famous injunction

to "beware the ides of March" would have read "beware the plays of March" if the author, as I suggested in an earlier paragraph, were among us now. There were thirteen "openings" during the month, and never was better evidence of the unluckiness of that number. Eleven of these "openings" were new pieces, and seven of the eleven were instantaneous failures. None achieved what promises to be lasting success. Thirty-one days proved to be sufficient time for two productions to run their course at Wallack's, with a third already in view at the Garden and the Herald Square. The *Lady Who Goes to the Theater With Me* suggests that many of our programs might have borne the quotation:

You know how little while we have to stay,
And, once departed, may return no more.

THE most virile drama of the month proved to be Porter Emerson Browne's "A FOOL THERE WAS," which Robert Hilliard presented at the Liberty Theater. This was Mr. Browne's maiden effort, and he had a narrow escape from writing a tremendously good play. That he *did* escape was due partly to his stage manager, partly to his actors, and chiefly to his willingness to sacrifice simple verity for what young authors are wont to describe vaguely as "symbolism."

"A FOOL THERE WAS" is the other side of the sex question taken up in "The Easiest Way." A gentleman, mentioned on the bill as "The Husband," has a tranquil and comfortable home, where he lives a love-laden life with "The Wife" and "The Child." Called abroad on a mission of importance, he meets "The Woman," who proceeds to ruin him, body, soul and bank account. The moment he sees this human vampire, sitting in a steamer chair over the spot where an earlier victim has killed himself a few minutes before, he enters upon his tragedy. "The Friend" has warned him by reciting the Kipling lines that give the piece its name. "Almost everybody's read that," says "The Husband." (For fear he might be

wrong the poem is distributed with the programs.) Nevertheless, he glances at his temptress, and the forget-me-nots his wife has placed in his hand fall to the deck. It is very sudden. I was reminded of the visitor to Paris whose spouse wired him, "Darling, be true to me," and who replied: "Your cable delayed in transmission."

However, putting jocularly aside, the destruction of "The Husband" is worked out swiftly and with crushing completeness. "The Woman" takes absolute possession of him, so that he forgets everything that was his and that was to have been. "The Friend" pleads with him, but is powerless against the fascination of the flesh. Down, down, down sinks the fool, until, like the man in the poem, he is "stripped to his foolish hide," when, despoiled and deserted by his mistress, he makes a feeble effort to regain what he has lost, and dies miserably amid the wreckage of what was the abiding place of peace and devotion. The idea is a smashing big one, and its exposition may be commended as a preachment, if not as a well developed drama. The husband who doesn't say "Home!" to the cabman after witnessing "A FOOL THERE WAS" is reformation-proof and irremediably wedded to his wicked way.

Mr. Browne's failure was the cost of his ambition to allegorize. I can't imagine what it is that makes budding Pineros yearn for dramatic metaphor, but I wish someone might gather them all in a group and warn them: "The symbol bug will get you if—you—don't—watch—out!" Heaven knows the pseudo-playwright has his work cut out for him in depicting the familiar and the everyday, without aspiring to flights of fancy, and heaven knows, too, that, in this age of sophisticated and observing audiences, no author has the least chance of success who does not see the world about him with the eye of a camera. We have got to the point where plays, like creeds, must bear the acid test of common sense.

The greater part of the symbolism meant to be in "A FOOL THERE WAS"

has been written into "The Woman," who, in consequence, is the loose screw in the machine of conviction. For some reason that does not readily appear, writers seem to find the lady of doubtful virtue a difficult model to draw. Even Kipling fozzled in sketching his street woman in "The Light That Failed," and the only genuine example of the type that I have found between covers Robert Hichens put into "Flames." The adolescent scribe feels he has filled all requirements in making his creature display her stockings and smoke a cigarette. When, after doing these things, she speaks a little French, we are expected to be sure that she is thoroughly bad. Mr. Browne's vampire talks like George Sylvester Viereck. She is of a totally different breed from the unfortunates of life—and from the fortunates. Women don't say, "Kiss me, fool," to men—especially not to men from whom they want favors—and they don't go about in a self-made "Way-Down-East" snowstorm of red rose petals. The temptress in "A FOOL THERE WAS" could never have lured any sane male to that path which ends in brandy and the green spotlight.

Throughout, the big flaw in this work is its dearth of verisimilitude. The play skates over the surface of life. Its people lack real employment, the evidences of real existence. They spend their time in rose gardens. Because of this artificial note, the piece excites surprise and horror, but never the sympathy it should compel. Little homely touches of human nature do that, and there are few of them here. When they do come, the play hits the high places, and becomes gripping, stirring, heart-quickenning drama. The scene between "The Husband" and "The Friend," in which the latter tells the former the truth about his love affair, is one of the biggest things the season has brought forth. There are three or four situations almost equally powerful, and these, with the wittiness of the dialogue, the originality and daring of the story, and the fact that one is tempted to go on endlessly discussing

the tragedy, make it clear that we shall hear a great deal more of Porter Emerson Browne. He is a dramatist with a spine, and vertebræ are the principal requirements of the dramatist.

Katharine Kaelred's performance of "The Woman" created a veritable riot of critical disagreement. It is easier to counterfeit acting than the notes of the Bank of England, and Miss Kaelred's particular brand of counterfeit, struck off the same die as Alla Nazimova's, passes current especially well. She belongs to the every-move-a-picture school of art, and I am sure she never attempted anything like a rational conception of her role. In one respect she is truly the heroine of the poem that suggested this play: "She never knew why . . . and could never understand."

Mr. Hilliard, as "The Husband," does the best work of his entire career. He limns sharply the various stages of the man's degradation, portraying weakness and strength with broad and emphatic strokes. William Courtleigh is stalwart and masculine in the character of "The Friend," and Nanette Comstock, as "The Wife," looks so much like Mrs. Newlywed that I had to glance at my bill to be certain I wasn't in the Majestic Theater. Emily Wurster is the usual stage child, and stage children make me sympathize with Herod. Frederic Thompson, who "announces" the production, has seized the opportunity for one Thompsonian effect—an excellent view of an ocean greyhound about to leave its pier.

"A FOOL THERE WAS" is a remarkable first effort, and, with all its faults, a play well worth seeing.

"AN ENGLISHMAN'S HOME" may succeed in this country, but, if so, it will be as another "Charley's Aunt."

Of course you know everything there is to know about this "patriotic" melodrama by Major Guy Du Maurier, eldest son of the man who wrote "Trilby." You know how its presentation in London completely upset the equanimity of all hands across the sea, driving thousands of good grooms and

barbers to enlist, inspiring Parliament to vote huge sums for use in improving the army and navy, and generally kicking up such a fuss that an ignorant onlooker might suppose the dreaded Germans were sitting on the Needles watching for a favorable opportunity to shoot the face off the town clock at Poole. J. M. Barrie cabled Charles Frohman that the play would "go anywhere," and so it went to the Criterion Theater.

There, as I hinted in the beginning, the piece has been received with shrieks of laughter, all its humor creating mirth, and, truth to tell, much of its pathos. I have seen mountaineers, who had ridden fourteen hours to reach "one night stands" in Kentucky or Tennessee, camp out in the streets, waiting to witness "The Clansman"; yet you can imagine how much of Thomas Dixon's negro-baiting melodrama would be understood in London. New York has about the same real interest in "AN ENGLISHMAN'S HOME." So long as the Hotel Cecil doesn't raise its rates, and there continue to be free days at the Tower and Westminster Abbey, nobody our side of the pond cares a tuppenny bit whether Britain is invaded by Germans or by Fiji Islanders. The spectacle of Mr. Brown's nice red drawing-room, at "Wickham in Essex," being spoiled by naughty cannoneers leaves us calm and resigned; we do not get unduly excited over its owner's bombastic declaration, "I am an Englishman!" and we feel no compunction at enjoying Major Du Maurier's satire at the expense of his militia even as we enjoyed Charles Hoyt's much cleverer satire at the expense of our own in "A Milk White Flag."

"AN ENGLISHMAN'S HOME" has a few incidents universal in their appeal, and these meet with a quick response at the Criterion. When a pleasant young man who has been standing upon a table making sport of the whole business is shot through the heart and tumbles to the floor, we gasped and were silent. Death is a tragedy in all languages. I was interested, too, in

noting that an audience which, up to that moment, had been strictly non-partisan, applauded the arrival of British troops after the invaders had executed poor old Brown. That act had touched a human note, and had made villains of the conquerors. The mere recital of how the unpreparedness of the Wickhamians made possible the devastation of a part of England, however, cannot be said to have thrilled a crowd whose ancestors would have been glad to do the same thing.

To be frank, the "patriotism" of the play *isn't* particularly grand, awe-inspiring or convincing. I remember trembling with awe one early morning, when, having been called to the bridge by a friendly captain, I saw the Channel fleet ducking its turrets in the billows of the North Sea. These vessels were a magnificent spectacle, whatever their flag, and seemingly invincible, which is more than can be said of the logic of "AN ENGLISHMAN'S HOME." The average human being cannot believe there breathes a man "with soul so dead" that he regards the invasion of his country only as reason to expect "two or three days' holiday," nor can he admit that, if all the Brown families in Britain deserted Diabolo and took to the Manual of Arms, they would be the better prepared to resist a disciplined and perfectly equipped force landed under cover of a fog. However, that is as it may be. Much of the play at the Criterion is amusing, more of it is entertaining, and, as an example of how little is required to excite the mob, it is a curio not to be neglected.

The presenting company, which includes William Hawtrey, J. H. Benrimo and Edgar Norton, is excellent, and the staging of the production cannot be too highly praised.

PERSONS who preach the evil consequences of bad language should avoid the subject of Henrietta Crosman, who twice has ridden to success astride of "a swear." To make a verse of this profane history,

It was *hell* in "Mistress Nell,"
And it was *damn* in "Sham."

The latter offering established itself early in its first act, but its popularity became a certainty when Miss Crosman, referring to the project of her marriage for money, remarked: "I'll be damned if I will!" This clever woman is so arch a comedienne, so exquisite an artiste, that we are glad to see her touch goad, no matter how she gets there, and the impression she made in Geraldine Bonner and Elmer Harris's collaboration will keep her for some time at Wallack's Theater.

"SHAM" was offered originally by Florence Roberts, and it is easy to understand why that excellent emotional actress was not satisfied with the play. Miss Bonner and Mr. Harris have woven a frail little comedy, following a pattern already familiar through "Clothes" and "The House of Mirth," but, like W. Somerset Maugham, whose profession is the polishing of old plots till they look like new, they have added a design of smart dialogue quite their own. Wit has been a drug on the market this season, and harder to get than morphia, so when Miss Crosman began reciting perfectly delicious lines in her charmingly spontaneous fashion nobody cared whether the story of "SHAM" came from "Cynthia" or from the Talmud.

This story concerns Katherine Van Riper, whose father has left her in poverty and a rather shabby apartment on Fifth Avenue. Miss Van Riper has inherited the instincts of a confidence woman (reflecting that a certain string of pearls had been given her great-great-grandmother by General Lafayette, she observed, "Grandma must have been a grafter, too") and an irresponsible disposition that was delightful to the audience, but must have been hard on the tradespeople. Katherine was sought in marriage by an extremely wealthy Westerner, "Monty" Buck, but overcoming the desire to add his bank book to her library, finally accepted a poor but pleasing engineer named Jaffray. The comedy of the piece took place in Miss Van Riper's apartments,

and the inevitable "big" scene in the ballroom at the Bucks'. Persons who are fond of tranquillity should make it a point to keep away from dances. Nine-tenths of our drama happens in ballrooms.

Miss Crosman's Katherine is worth going miles to enjoy. The most commendable performer in her support is Homer Miles, who realizes a genuine type in "Monty" Buck.

"THE BACHELOR," in which Charles Cherry makes his bow as a star at Maxine Elliott's Theater, is even slighter and less vertebrate than "Sham." It is rather a clever trifle—if somebody *must* crochet comedies for us, I hope it will always be Clyde Fitch—but after you have seen it you feel as though you had been very hungry and had dined on charlotte russe. The decorations at Maxine Elliott's are pale yellow and delicate, sea foam green, and the Messrs. Shubert have taken care that every play presented thus far shall conform to its color scheme.

"THE BACHELOR" indubitably owes its existence to the success of "Girls," trading, as does its progenitor, upon the charm of youth and the exhilaration of sprightly romance. "Girls" dealt with the conquest of man haters; "THE BACHELOR" deals with that of a woman hater, and both had their chief scenes in a place of business, where a playful little office force could lend a helping hand. George Goodale is the object of attack in "THE BACHELOR." His stenographer falls in love with him ("Why don't you get a man stenographer?" asks his friend, and he replies: "Because I've tried 'em, and they're no good!"), and her brother, learning the truth, tells "the boss" that he has compromised her. Thereupon George proposes, and Millicent Rendell is very happy until she discovers the wherefore and why. When she spurns him, Goodale really does fall in love—as is the nature of the beast—and all ends as merrily as a wedding bell.

Charles Cherry's performance of Goodale makes it evident that Cherries

were ripe to star. He has much of the amiable *insouciance* of the late Charles Coghlan, and is, altogether, a pleasant fellow and an agreeable comedian. Ruth Maycliffe, as Millicent, acts as you would expect the Nell Brinkley girl to act if she came to life. She is thirty per cent. pure Billie Burke, and the other seventy per cent. affectation and conscious allurements.

I'M sure Maurice V. Samuels's first-born, "THE CONFLICT," isn't as bad as it seemed on its opening night at the Garden, because no play *could* be that bad.

The program assured us that the piece, "founded upon Balzac's 'La Peau de Chagrin,' does not purport to be a dramatization." The declaration wasn't necessary. "THE CONFLICT" obviously is not Honoré de Balzac—it is dis-Honoré de Balzac.

Mr. Samuels has given a "happy ending" to the story of the impoverished young man who accepts a bit of wild ass's skin to supply his wants. Whatever he wishes is to be given him, but with every wish the skin will shrink, and when it disappears its owner must die. In the play, a girl who loves the reckless youth saves him by demanding that he wish only the good of others, an altruism that has all the effect of Wool Soap. Mr. Samuels wasted the trouble he spent in making this variation from the original. Any ending of "THE CONFLICT" would have been a "happy ending."

LEB WILSON DODD, another newcomer in the field of dramatic authorship, butchered an excellent idea in "THE RETURN OF EVE," which signaled the return of Bertha Galland to the stage and the Herald Square Theater. This comedy began in a vein of agreeable fantasy, but soon turned its coat and became a thoroughly artificial and clatrapy melodrama. Give the average tyro-made play acts enough and it will hang itself.

Mr. Dodd's idea was the treatment of two young people, who had spent their lives in a wilderness, and who, bountifully endowed with the world's

goods, were set down suddenly in the smartest society of New York. The result should have been charmingly quaint. It proved to be impossibly conventional. Eve, bothered with suitors in search of her money, one of whom touched the heights of nobility when he declared that his affection for her made him willing to go to work, finally turned on the guests in her house, and, mounting a platform, told them all to go to blazes, that she was going back to Eden. The Eden from which this Eve came must have been the Eden Musée.

THE rest of the month's moribund have now been dead so long that there seems little use of erecting headstones. "The Return of Eve" was preceded at the Herald Square by Louis Anspacher's "A WOMAN OF IMPULSE," in which Kathryn Kidder came back to us, and which left impulsively at the end of a fortnight. The humor of this farcical melodrama reached its summit when a coroner, called to hold an inquest, promised to favor the homicides, his acquaintances, by finding a verdict of accidental death. After all, what's a murder among friends?

"VOTES FOR WOMEN," a tract produced in the cause of equal suffrage, quitted the stage of Wallack's to make way for "Sham." A remarkable feature of this dull play is that nearly three centuries before Christ the same subject was handled, from a directly opposite viewpoint, in a satire by Aristophanes, entitled "The Parliament of Women." "MEYER AND SON," a drama concerning the intermarriage of Jews and Christians, vacated the Garden in favor of "The Conflict" and "THE RICHEST GIRL," a farce with the flavor that the French alone seem able to put into their pastry and their plays, failed to draw when presented by Marie Doro at the Criterion.

If anything in the world can be sadder than the "comic" supplements, it is the plays "adapted" from them, and silence is the kindest criticism of "THE NEWLYWEDS AND THEIR BABY," at the Majestic

SOME NOVELS—AND A GOOD ONE

By H. L. MENCKEN

I HAD just finished a week's exploration of new American novels, hot from the presses in all their gauds of gilt stamping and rainbow illustration. There were ten or a dozen of them, and all but one or two were by women. They dealt with the sufferings and passions of dashing young boys and sweet girls of the utmost niceness, and they were addressed to the sort of folks who hold Charles Klein to be the first of living dramatists and look upon a church wedding as the most delightful of all public exhibitions. Each of the dozen resembled all of the others. In every one the plot was the plot eternal of the American best-seller. In every one the desire of some overdressed young man to acquire a wife was pictured as an important and even remarkable matter.

My week of such fare had come to an end at last, and it was Sunday afternoon—a gloomy, soggy Sunday afternoon. Laboring under a vast depression of spirits, I went to my shelf of immortal vulgarians. But there was no balm in Farquhar, nor yet in Rabelais. Far off a street evangelist preached of Hell. A neighbor's baby yowled. A bell began to toll in the convent across the street. It grew darker, gloomier, more ghostly. I felt like a wilting violet, a coroner's jury, a poem by Paul Verlaine. There was nothing to do but stretch out upon the floor, light a cheroot and groan the day away. . . .

A glimmer of red caught my eye, and I reached out idly for a little book that crowned a pyramid of big ones. The

name of this red book seemed to be "THE POWER OF A LIE," and the title page said that it had been translated by Jessie Muir from the Norwegian of Johan Bojer. Who was this Mr. Bojer of Norway? Wasn't there a dramatist of that name—a follower of old Mr. Ibsen? Or maybe he was a critic? Somehow, the name called up a wavering, nebulous sort of memory of a play, a book, an article, a paragraph in a bibliography. No doubt the Gyldendal catalogue would tell. I was too lazy to get it. I turned to the preface— It was by Hall Caine! I skipped it . . .

Part I. Chapter I. "The night was falling as Knut Norby drove homeward in his sledge . . ."

Two hours later I put down one of the most original stories I have ever read—one of the most striking, real, interesting, impressive, convincing. Here was a novelist who had cast aside entirely all of the customary materials and machinery of prose fiction. The handsome young lovers of the American novel were not in his book. The tortured married folks, the middle-aged Camilles, the dress-suited Romeos of the modern British novel were absent, too. The "eternal triangle" of the French novel was flattened out to a straight line. Bojer and the sexual obsession were strangers. The things that interested him most in human life were not those elemental emotions which have their origin in physiological processes, but those higher and more elusive emotions which arise out of ideas. He asked of a given man, not, how did he win his wife, and how does

he hold her? but, what is his rating as an individual and how does he maintain it?

The central figure in "THE POWER OF A LIE" (Kennerley, \$1.50) is Knut Norby, a Norwegian nabob of a variety by no means confined to Norway. He is, indeed, the archetype of the Prominent Citizen. He is richer than the average man of his neighborhood, and so he is supposed to be wiser and more virtuous, too. He sits upon committees, he is a trustee of estates and his opinion is sought and heeded whenever a mayor is to be elected, a road to be opened or a visiting dignitary to be entertained. He knows how to make a good speech and he is in great demand as an honorary pallbearer. His charities are far from secret, perhaps, but it cannot be said that they are mean. He is, in a word, plainly above the common level, and he knows it.

Such a man is Knut Norby. Of a very different type is Henry Wangen. Henry, it must be admitted, has more brains than Knut, and vastly more imagination, but the one thing that he lacks sadly is Knut's chief stock in trade, and that thing is respectability. His father, long since dead, was a careless man with other folks' money, and it is easy to argue that the son, if he ever had to face the same temptation, would show the same weakness. But despite this heavy handicap Henry manages to get on in the world. He floats small stock companies, he introduces new industries into the neighborhood and he makes friends with the toilers by reducing their hours of labor. People begin to say that he will be rich some day, and that he will end by cutting a figure in politics. Even old Knut Norby, his suspicions sunk into a smoldering, ineffective sort of jealousy, succumbs to Henry's blandishments and goes on his notes of hand as endorser for a good round sum.

Then, with scarcely a moment's warning, comes the deluge. A small difficulty causes gossip, gossip causes a panic—and Henry tries in vain to stem the tide. He commandeers and sacri-

fices his wife's money, his father-in-law's money. But it is too late. A horde of creditors come galloping on; the old prophets of disaster and felony proceed from whispers to howls. Henry goes to the wall—and Knut is on his paper for that good round sum.

It is at this point that the action of Bojer's story properly begins. We see Knut face to face with a situation that is doubly disconcerting, for not only is his money in dire peril, but also his reputation for omniscience. People are wondering now how anyone could ever have trusted Henry. That Knut the wise is actually on his list of victims seems preposterous—even impossible. No doubt that so-called endorsement was forged by Henry himself . . .

Knut is ashamed, at first, to grasp at this suggestion. But it presents itself to him constantly and insistently, and while he is trying to fight it off his silence begins to give it authenticity. The only man, save Henry, who saw him sign his name is dead—and Henry's unsupported word is worth less than nothing. Why not boldly deny the endorsement—and let Henry get out of his mess as best he can? For that matter, why not help the rascal on to prison? He deserves a year or so there on general principles. He has disorganized business, inflamed the workingmen, ruined a hundred small investors and got the whole neighborhood into a turmoil. Let him pay for his bumptiousness and serve as a warning to others.

So Knut makes oath that he didn't sign Henry's note, and Henry is put upon his trial for forgery. There are folks who believe him innocent—one of them is Knut's own son—and some even venture to go upon the stand for him; but Knut's vast respectability is sufficient answer to these sinister slanders. And then poor Henry, facing certain conviction, grasps foolishly at a straw. He attempts to forge evidence in his own favor. The jury laughs at him, and his condemnation follows as a matter of course. Two weeks after he begins serving his sentence the principal citizens of the neighborhood, burying

all party differences, give Knut Norby a solemn public dinner—to celebrate his triumphant escape from the villain's clutches.

Hall Caine, in the course of his rather patronizing preface to Miss Muir's translation, objects to the book on the ground that it is immoral. It seems to teach, he says, that "the presiding power in the world is not only not God, but the devil." This notion is about as pertinent and sound as the kindred idea, so prevalent among shopgirls and telephone operators, that Mr. Caine's own books are magnificent works of art. As a matter of fact, you may get out of this little Norwegian masterpiece, if you demand a moral in every book you read, the most awful and portentous warning ever put into words; and it is this: Judge not, that ye be not judged! But Bojer, I believe, had no intention of writing a tract when he set out to reduce the "power of a lie" to words. His purpose, I take it, was that of every other true artist: to draw the thing as he saw it for the god of things as they are—that and nothing more.

My rough outline gives but a faint picture of the little book's vigor and reality. Knut Norby is not merely a successful perjurer. He accepts the homage of his fellows at the end, not because he is dead to all decency, but because he has begun to believe in his own lie. The process whereby he arrives at this self-delusion is described by Bojer with remarkable insight and skill. As a study in the gradual evolution of an idea, I know of nothing to compare with it, saving only, perhaps, that famous analysis by George Moore of Evelyn Innes's slow submergence into Christian mysticism. And Henry Wangen, also, is no common type. There is nothing in him of the orthodox hero. At the start he is perfectly innocent, but at the close one cannot help feeling that, even though he did not forge Norby's name, he is far from an honest man. The public view of him has colored his own view of himself. He almost acquiesces in his punishment.

In the form of the book—the arrangement and sequence of its incidents and the management of its dialogue—Bojer displays the sure hand of a master craftsman. Born in 1869, and a figure in Norwegian literature since 1897, he probably has his best work yet to do.

—“THE JOURNAL OF A NEGLECTED WIFE,” by Mabel Herbert Urner (*Dodge*, \$1.10), is far from a masterpiece, but it has enough interest and novelty to make it a welcome break in the dull round of commonplace native fiction. I know of at least a dozen American novelists of wide popularity who could not, for all the royalties in Christendom, write so good a book.

The journal is supposed to be that of a somewhat hysterical and romantic woman, verging upon middle age, who discovers evidence that her husband has gone astray. At the start, she has little more than agonizing suspicions, but as time goes on they are supplanted by ample proofs. The obvious thing for a woman to do under such circumstances is to make a row, but this woman is not of the row making sort. She even shrinks from confronting her husband with her discovery, her whole desire is to win him back and let the dead past bury its dead. More than once, indeed, her dominant emotion is not anger, but terror—terror that events will take such a turn that it will be impossible for her, in self-respect, to accept even complete repentance as atonement.

Eventually her pride drives her out of the house, and for a week she hides. Then she comes back again and things are as they were before. Soon, however, there appears a change in her. Once in mortal dread of a climax, of an end of things, she is now suddenly eager that the air be cleared; that there be a frank unmasking on both sides. It comes almost immediately. The Other Woman dies, and her child with her. The husband, crushed, makes confession . . . And the wife forgives.

A critic whom I hold in great respect objects to this book on the ground that

the wife is a foolish woman. But this objection, it seems to me, has no validity whatever. Isn't the foolish woman a type worth investigating? Isn't it a fact, indeed, that the average woman is often a foolish woman? I suspect that she is, and I suspect, too, that she often endures such agonies as Mrs. Urner has heaped upon her heroine. This woman, let it be remembered, is sufficiently civilized to be introspective. She still loves her husband, and when she discovers that she has lost him, her first thought is to seek within herself the springs of his apostasy. She makes pathetic efforts at self-analysis and self-criticism; she tries the old blandishments and coquetries. And when they fail she is still more than half convinced that the change has been in her rather than in him.

The man we see only through the woman's eyes, but it is possible, nevertheless, to comprehend him. He is no romantic Don Juan, no thoughtless polygamist, but a man upon whom civilization has fastened the idea of responsibility. Once he has crossed the border—as any man not a saint may cross it tomorrow, if not today—the thing that looms largest in his sight is his duty to the mother of his child. Let the man and the woman be husband and wife, and this feeling of responsibility is universally admitted to be a veritable aristocrat among virtues. But let there be no such tie, and it ceases to exhilarate the moral mind. And yet I have no doubt that it may be just as powerful and serve the high purposes of the human race just as gloriously in the one case as in the other.

This man fancies that he loves the Other Woman, and at the end he is puzzled by the discovery that he also loves his wife. I think that the latter understands him far better than he understands himself. She sees the difference between the two emotions that arise in him—on the one hand his tenderness for the sweetheart of his youth and faithful comrade of his manhood, and on the other hand his tenderness for that Other Woman whose claims upon

him, however slight they may be otherwise, find almost irresistible power in the fact that her blood will flow in the veins of his son.

Mrs. Urner achieves a difficult thing in her book, and that is an air of almost complete illusion. You may find her heroine tiresome and even laughable, but you will seldom find her unreal.

"THE CLIMBING COURVATELS," by Edward W. Townsend (*Stokes*, \$1.25), is an example of an excellent story maimed in the telling. The Courvatels, otherwise Dick and Betty Courtney, are a pair of Yankee vaudevillains who lead a double life. At two performances a day they divert the great masses of the plain people with sleight of hand and feats of white magic, and in the intervals they climb socially. It is not until they are at the top of the fashionable tree that Mr. and Mrs. Courtney are discovered to be identical with M. et Mme. Courvatel. Then everyone is most charitable and forgiving, and there is no distressing slide down again.

An excellent comic idea and one that might have made a memorably amusing book. Mr. Townsend, unfortunately, lacks the Gallic resourcefulness and lightness of touch which such a story needs. Where there should be the delicate humor of cross-purpose and situation, he puts his trust in the heavy, machine-made humor of slang. Even this slang, of course, cannot utterly spoil so good a farce, and at its worst it is certainly far from dull. But just suppose Mr. Townsend had been able to write it as a Frenchman would have written it!

A number of novels planned to rescue the world from its sinful ways are on the spring list. One of them, "PRIESTS OF PROGRESS," by G. Colmore (*Dodge*, \$1.50), is a wooden and rather disagreeable argument against vivisection. The author is in deadly earnest, and so his pages are besprinkled with footnotes and references which recall the (Mark, vi, 22) and (Genesis, xx, 16) of the old-time

Sunday school books. The result is that his evidence impedes and demoralizes his story and his story dilutes his evidence. Had his whole argument been cast in the frankly dialectic, instead of in the fictional form, the earnest vivisectionist, I have no doubt, would have been better pleased, and the ordinary, barbarian reader of delicate stomach would have been warned off more humanely. As it is, this apathetic barbarian will probably shudder now and then as he reads the book—and lay it down at the end with no appreciable decline in his unspeakable determination to absorb antitoxin as usual the next time he has diphtheria. The anti-vivisectionists write their ghastly books and fling their ghastly anathemas—but the world goes marching on. Five hundred years from now it will look back upon them with the same incredulous wonder with which it now regards the medieval bishops who called down curses upon poor old Andreas Vesalius.

In "THE BURNT OFFERING" (*Broadway Pub. Co.*, \$1.50), Edith Nicholl Ellison undertakes to wage a literary *jahad* upon the marriage of consumptives. In the hands of a Zola the story that she tells might have become a moving picture of horror, but as it is, it seldom rises above a sort of stupid unpleasantness. Miss Ellison lacks invention and imagination, and her call to write, I fear, is a false alarm. More than once her story ceases altogether to be a story and becomes a mere tract.

"OUT OF THE DUMP," by Mary E. Marcy (*Kerr*, 50 cents), is a modest little book of Chicago slum stories. Miss Marcy is a Socialist and, like all others of that fantastic persuasion, she is unable to forget the fact, even when engaged in the engrossing art of literary endeavor. But notwithstanding and in spite of their propagandist color, her stories have interest, reality and no little artistic value. She knows how to achieve atmosphere,

and she knows how to give rotundity to her characters. Some day, no doubt, she will write a full length novel. When she does, I venture to predict, it will be a novel well worth reading.

Another earnest little book that gives promise of better things is "THE REVELATION IN THE MOUNTAIN," by Gertrude Major (*Cochrane*, \$1.00). It is a collection of stories and sketches of Mormon life and it breathes uncompromising hostility to the genial weaknesses of the Saints. But some of the stories are very well done. I know of no writer who has set forth with greater simplicity and effectiveness the poignant tragedy of the Mormon woman's life.

"JIMBO," by Algernon Blackwood (*Macmillan*, \$1.25), is a novel and curious study of the mind of a child. A boy of seven, an imaginative, hysterical little fellow, is inoculated with grotesque fancies by his governess. One day while fleeing from hobgoblins he is horned by a cow, and for three hours lies unconscious. The phantoms and visions of these hours make up the body of the story. It is a tale full of Barrie-like fancy and extravaganza, and it does not lack Barrie-like touches of poetry. Decidedly a novelty and well worth reading.

"THE WILD GESE," by Stanley J. Weyman (*Doubleday-Page*, \$1.50), is a romantic novel from the studio of an accomplished but somewhat exhausted workman. The old feeling for the romantic and picturesque is there, and so is the old skill at manufacturing and managing situations of theatrical effectiveness, but one misses the old air of earnestness and reality. Mr. Weyman's early tales were so well done that they seemed almost true, and one was always convinced that the author, at any rate, believed them. But in this story there is little spontaneity. The characters—half savage Irishmen of the eighteenth century—are vastly less

appealing than those famous gentlemen of France, and the love making is not as thrilling as of old. But maybe the lack lies in the reader. The taste for romance withers. The sun do move.

"THE HOUSE DIGNIFIED," by Lillie Hamilton French (*Putnam*, \$5.00), is an elaborate and suggestive treatise upon the design and adornment of human habitations. The book seems to be planned chiefly for those of swollen fortune, but the home builder of more modest means will find many a useful idea in it, and not a few valuable "don'ts." Some of the pictures of great houses reveal unblushingly and almost indecently the abominable taste of the American millionaire. Here and there, of course, one happens upon an ideally beautiful room—the lower hall in the late William C. Whitney's town house, for example—but against these are many sad examples of decorative running amuck. One of the pictures, in particular, recalls forcibly the overpowering reception rooms encountered by thrill-seeking American tourists in certain of the more devilish parts of Paris.

The chief impression that one gets from "THE STORY OF MY LIFE," by Ellen Terry (*McClure*, \$4.00), is this: that one has spent a most agreeable afternoon with a charming woman—not with a public character, but with a delightfully naïve and unintellectual woman. Miss Terry's story, indeed, is not the history of her public triumphs, but the story of her life as a whole, and in that life there has been more of interest off the stage than on.

Miss Terry became the wife, while yet a mere child, of a great English artist, and she has been the intimate friend of many another man and woman of the first consideration; but she seems to have borrowed no solemnity from these pundits. She has been interested, apparently, less in their work than in themselves, and so her accounts of them have to do, not with their theories of life and art, but with

their doings in their hours of ease. The result is a book full of human interest. The Henry Irving that we see in it is a man of childish foibles, perhaps, but for all that he is a far more real man than the Irving of the official biographies.

Miss Terry is nearly sixty, but she is still young at heart. When she thinks of Shakespeare, I venture, it is not Hamlet's soul struggle, but the frock she wore as Ophelia that crowds to the foreground.

Gilbert K. Chesterton, it is plain, is getting on in the world. At the age of thirty-five he is already the Socrates of a busy grove of philosophers, and his recent conversion to Christianity attracted more attention than the yielding up of any other single sinner since Billy Sunday. Now comes a book about him—a genuine, full length biography, bound in scarlet and gold and 266 pages thick. This book, "GILBERT CHESTERTON: A CRITICISM" (*Lane*, \$1.50), tells us all that is worth knowing about the man, and not a little that is not worth knowing. We begin with an examination of his family tree and end with a glimpse of him taking his daily—or is it hourly?—pot of sack in Fleet Street. There is a picture showing him as a gawky, cadaverous boy of seventeen, and there are other pictures showing him as he is today—vast, elephantine, almost balloon-like. And besides all these things, there is a most entertaining explanation and defense of his various theories, doctrines and dogmas, and of his vitriolic journalese—the best journalese, it may be said, that any man ever wrote. The book is anonymous, but—well, I have my suspicions. So firm are they, indeed, that I hereby publicly accuse Mr. Chesterton of having written it himself.

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Le Gallienne

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WHAT does a poet do with his money? What did Keats do with the payment he received for the "Ode to a Grecian Urn"? How did Shakespeare spend the proceeds of "Hamlet"? Most likely used it to settle a grocery bill or pay something on account to the butcher. Incongruous, isn't it, says Mr. Le Gallienne, that the sublimity and deathless inspiration of a "Paradise Lost" should be translated into the vulgar parlance of overdue house rent and unpaid board bills. Yet not more incongruous, he adds, than the idea that any amount of money could be deemed a fair valuation of a soul's aspirations, or the tumult of a heart.

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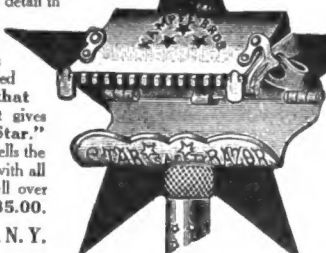
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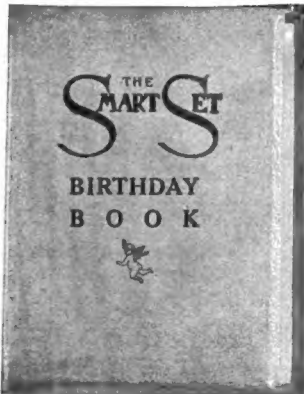
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